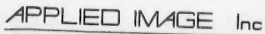


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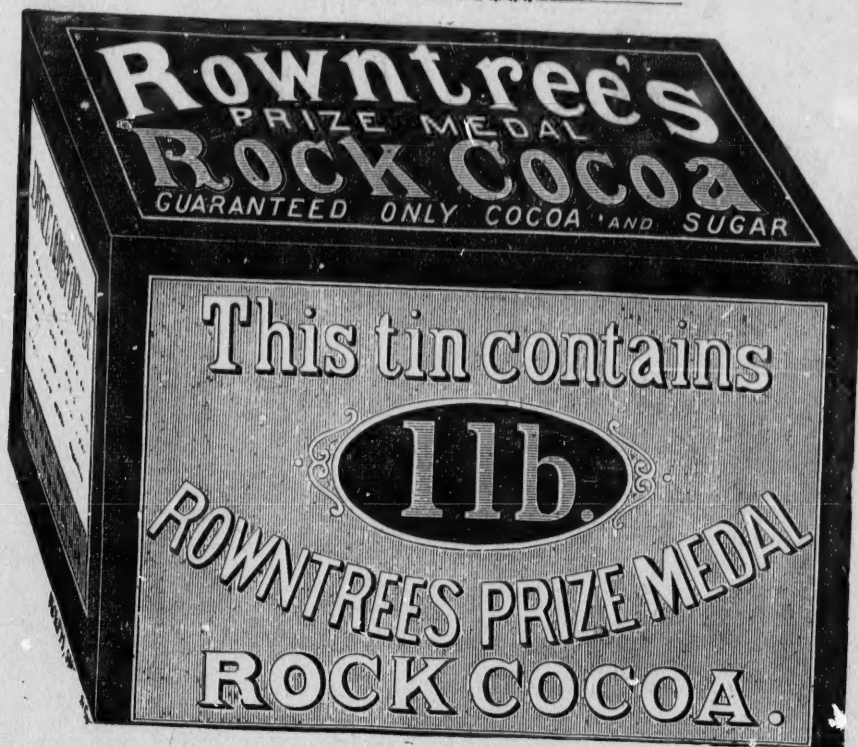
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BY

WALTER BESANT AND JAMES RICE,  
AUTHORS OF "READY MONEY MORTIBOY," "THE GOLDEN BUTTERFLY,"  
"BY CELIA'S ARBOUR," ETC.

Toronto, Chicago and Detroit:  
ROSE-BELFORD PUBLISHING CO.  
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## CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER I.	
IN ROUSDON BAY.....	5
CHAPTER II.	
LOVE THE UNCONQUERED .....	14
CHAPTER III.	
A LUCKY RUN .....	24
CHAPTER IV.	
THE KING'S CLEMENCY .....	37
CHAPTER V.	
FEMINA FURENS .....	49
CHAPTER VI.	
LADY CAMPION .....	64
CHAPTER VII.	
THE VICTORY OF TRAFALGAR.....	76
CHAPTER VIII.	
OUT OF THE GOLDEN MIST .....	83

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# 'Twas in TRAFALGAR'S BAY.

## CHAPTER I.

IN ROUSDON BAY.

**T**HERE are not many places in England which are more beautiful than Lyme Regis, the place where my own childhood was spent. You have long hill-slopes, covered with orchards and hanging woods; you have broad valleys, in which are peaceful hamlets and yellow cornfields; you have open spaces on windy hill-tops, where tall thistles are crowned with winged balls of feathered spray, ready to be blown to the four corners of the earth by the carrier winds; you have chalk downs with bare turf, and here and there a bright trout stream, where you may see the quick-eyed water-rat, or even catch a glimpse of an otter; you have straight and sturdy cliffs, looking out upon the waste waters; you have here and there a little port with its little town; and you have, as the towering glory and splendour of the whole, the Undercliff, with its bracken fields and grassy knolls heaped one above the other, backed by the crags and faced by the sea, telling of fallen rocks and undermining waves.

My name, when I was a child and ran wild among these wonders, learning every day to feel their beauty more, was Pleasance Noel. There are plenty of Noels in Dorsetshire, but none of my kin in Lyme. Nor do I know how I came to be born there, nor anything about my mother, who died when I was born; nor much about my father, who was a ship-carpenter by rank and calling. I was born, I believe, in the year one thousand seven hundred and eighty-seven. I never had a birthday, because no one cared to remember such an insignificant circumstance as the birth of a sailor's child. My father went down in eighty-nine, on board the *Invincible*, which foundered in a heavy gale off Jamaica, with all hands except two or three. These managed to get to land or to be picked up, I forget which, and told the disastrous story.

Dan Gulliver came to my help, being always the most kind-hearted of men, and, besides, a friend of my father's. He lived at Rousdon, which is three miles and a-half from Lyme, being then a widower with two boys living, two or three years older than myself.

There are a good many Gullivers

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in Dorsetshire, as well as Noels. When I first read Gulliver's Travels, it was the more real to me, because I was sure that the honest captain must have come from my part of the country, and I was equally sure that in appearance he greatly resembled Dan.

Nobody, except his sons, ever called him anything else but Dan. Not Mr. Gulliver, or Daniel Gulliver, but plain Dan. As early as I can remember him, he had grey hair. He was a man of middle height and strong build, with immense hands; he had a face covered all over with crowsfoot wrinkles, and it had the kindest and gentlest expression that can dwell upon human countenance; his light-blue eyes rested upon one when he spoke, as if he loved to look upon his friend; he was as incapable of thinking or speaking evil as of doing it. Therefore he was everybody's friend. I suppose he knew very little of evil, living as he did upon his seaboard farm, as remote from the world and as little suspicious of danger as did those poor men of Laish, who dwelt "after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure."

His estate consisted of a patrimonial ten-acre slip, lying chiefly along the cliff. It was a poor piece of land, which grew scanty crops, hardly worth the trouble of cultivation, but it gave occupation to the two boys, Job and Jephthah, and to the one farm-labourer whom

we employed, Isaac Agus; Dan himself looked after the boats, of course. If the land was poor, the farmhouse and yards showed every sign of prosperity. There were pigs which grunted in the sties or roamed about the yard, grubbing among roots with philanthropic resolve to waste no time in becoming good pork; fowls which laid eggs and chucked over them; ducks which drove broods of little soft yellow balls, which might have been cocoons had they not been live things, into the pond; geese, on the waste land, which cackled to each other encouragement to get fat come Michaelmas; and there were the most generous of cows in the matter of milk. The dairy, where Mrs. Agus and I made butter, was always full of cream and milk; there were hayricks, ploughs, flails, carts, harrows, and all the signs of successful cultivation.

The twin boys, Job and Jephthah, were, like their father, of middle height, with broad shoulders and big hands; they were as exactly like each other as a pair of Chinamen, but when you came to live in the house, you learned gradually to distinguish certain little differences not apparent to strangers. Outside the farm no one knew Jephthah from Job, and addressed either at random as Job or Jephthah. They had blue eyes, like their father, light-brown hair, and a gentle way, which they inherited. But they exaggerated the paternal



Isaac Agus; Dan after the boats, of land was poor, the yards showed every city. There were pigs in the sties or roams, grubbing among anthrophic resolve in becoming good which laid eggs and them; ducks which of little soft yellow might have been co-not been live things, geese, on the waste kled to each other to get fat come and there were the of cows in the mat-e dairy, where Mrs. e butter, was al-m and milk; there oughs, flails, carts, the signs of suc-on.

rs, Job and Jeph-e their father, of ith broad should-nds; they were as other as a pair of hen you came to you learned gra-uish certain little parent to strang-arm no one knew ob, and addressed as Job or Jeph-ue eyes, like their own hair, and a h they inherited. ated the paternal

characteristics. His gentleness became, with them, slowness; his taciturnity became absolute dumbness.

The most frequent visitor was Joshua Meech, Dan's nephew. He was a miller at Up Lyme. When I was sixteen he must have been about six-and-twenty—some seven years older than the boys. He, too, was strongly built and well-proportioned, but he had the other Dorsetshire face—not that of the Gullivers. Everybody knows that there are two faces in Dorsetshire—that with blue eyes and brown hair, a round face, and that with dark hair and dark eyes, an oval face; sometimes very beautiful, but sometimes forbidding and harsh. Joshua's face had the latter character. His eyes were too close together; his expression was threatening; his chin too long and square; his manner was imperative. He was a masterful man, a man who always got what he wanted; if he desired a thing, he said he should have it, and he got it. The history that follows, however, is that of a thing which he desired vehemently and did not get. Another visitor, and the only other friend of the family, was the rector of Rousdon, the Reverend Benjamin Burden.

Rousdon parish contained a population of eleven souls, six of whom came from Rousdon Farm. Its yearly value was thirty-five pounds. There was also a house with a bit of glebe-land. The house

was a cottage; the glebe-land was a garden cultivated by the rector himself. He had an orchard, the apples of which he sold for cider, a fruit and vegetable garden, two or three pigs, some fowls, and sometimes, the gift of his churchwarden, some ducks. He was a bachelor, and lived entirely alone in his cottage. His church was a barn with a thatched roof, kept from falling down by Dan and the boys. The old pews were worm-eaten; the pulpit was tottering; the broken windows were repaired with oiled paper; the covers were dropping off the church-bible and prayer-book; his surplice was in rags; there was no church-plate; and the one weekly service was a duet between himself and Dan, who was at once his clerk and his churchwarden. The old rector wore a wig on Sundays; on other days he tied up his head in a handkerchief; he never forgot his cloth, or went out without a cassock, though that garment was in rags; he had the dignity of his profession, though he had forgotten all his learning, ceased to take any delight in books, and was nothing but a gardener, a rustic, and a peasant-priest.

Our house, at the back of which lay the farmyard, was a good-sized six-roomed house, with a thatched roof. The windows in the front looked out upon Rousdon bay, which lay about eighty feet below us. They opened on hinges, and the small panes, many of which

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were bulls'-eyed, were set in heavy leaden frames. There was a great porch, beside which flourished the finest fuchsia-tree—ten feet high, and ten feet across—that ever was seen. There was a sloping garden in front, where I grew beans, peas, and cabbages, with all kinds of simple flowers. We were quite rich people. When the distress was deep all over the country, we felt none. We lived comfortably; there was no pinching, no talk of economies. I was well-dressed and well cared for; the boys had all they wanted.

To be sure, in those days, the ideas of a farmer as to plenty were simple. We never had any holiday or any change. The boys got a little teaching, as I did, from the rector; we had no newspapers and very few books; most country-people could not read; there were no conveniences for travel; things were rough; men were rough; fighting was common; we were inconceivably ignorant; we did not look or hope for any change except for peace. That was what we wanted. I suppose the people of that generation ought to have been unhappy, feeling themselves so greatly at a disadvantage compared with their grand-children, who would certainly have gas, railways, chloroform, electric light, cheap newspapers, all sorts of things. But somehow they were not unhappy. They were just as happy, in fact, as people are now, except for the

wickedness of war, the ambition of kings, and the injustice of man. And these are things which seem destined ever to plague, vex, and trouble the world.

Now, the most remarkable thing concerning Dan, his two sons, and Joshua Meech, his nephew, was that their hands were always brown with tar. There was, besides, a smell of things connected with boats always lingering about his house; and though fishing-nets were constantly spread over the garden or on the beach, there was very little fishing done.

Dan, farmer though he was, dressed habitually as a boatman. On Sundays, in the summer, he wore white ducks, a blue jacket with brass buttons, and a straw hat, just as if he was a navy man. On other days, he wore great boots, a simple blue shirt, and a tarpaulin. Down in the bay there were three boats. One of these was a safe, heavy-built fishing-smack. Dan called her the *Chace Mary*. It was a good many years before I learned to recognize in this name the French *chasse-marée*. Dan picked her up one night abandoned in the Channel—his experience decided her origin and her name. The boys and Joshua used now and then to go out fishing in her, bringing home in the morning a rich cargo of bright and beautiful fish. We kept the best for ourselves, and the rector never failed to come for his tithe of John Dory,

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bass, hake, pilchards, or mackerel.  
The rest went to Lyme to be sold.

The boat which lay beside the  
Chace Mary was of very different  
build. She would be called now,  
though her lines would no longer  
find favour: a fifteen-ton yacht,  
sloop-rigged. I do not know where  
Dan bought her; she was long and  
narrow; she was decked; she car-  
ried any amount of canvas; and  
she was, as Dan often boasted, the  
very fastest boat in the Channel.  
She was called the Dancing Polly.

Hauled up on the beach was a  
little dingy, gay with bright paint,  
and provided with a neat lugsail  
and a spritsail and a pair of sculls.  
She belonged to me, but was, of  
course, always at the service of  
the Firm.

For not to delay any longer a  
confession which must sooner or  
later be made, we were all of us  
smugglers by trade, and farmers  
by pretence. The ten acres of  
barren cliff land could never have  
kept us all during those hard  
times, even in a poor way. We  
were a gang of smugglers. Dan  
was the head of the firm by  
hereditary succession. His two  
boys were partners by the same  
right. Joshua Meech was a part-  
ner by grace and free gift of Dan.  
I, Pleasance Noel, was an accom-  
plice, aider, and abettor.

In the reign of great George the  
Third it was as impossible to make  
people believe that smuggling  
was wrong as to make a rustic

believe in the wickedness of knock-  
ing over a hare in a field. To evade  
the duty was meritorious. Then  
there was the romance about the  
trade: perils surrounded it on  
every side; across the water you  
might be caught by the French  
authorities, and kept in prison, or  
or even shot as a spy; or you might  
be picked up by a French privateer;  
or you might be cut out by a rev-  
enue cutter; or you might be ar-  
rested while landing your cargo.  
These things were considered and  
went to make a daring smuggler  
a sort of hero. Lastly, all the  
country-side stood in with him.  
It was he who brought over the  
best French brandy, packages of  
lace, boxes of gloves or of perfumes;  
he was the provider of otherwise  
unattainable luxuries; he was a  
public benefactor. In no country  
inn could you get such spirits as  
came out of the illicit kegs; when  
a landlord had any he would  
whisper its recommendation to a  
guest; the squires bought it, the  
magistrates bought it, the very  
revenue officers bought it, the  
clergy bought it, no one too  
good, too highly placed, too scru-  
pulous to buy it. A fine and flat-  
tering perfume of universal grati-  
tude perpetually soothed the soul  
of Dan Gulliver; the sense of an  
heroic reputation added dignity  
to a life which, if spent only on  
the farm, would have been cer-  
tainly monotonous, and probably  
ignoble.

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Gratitude among the people naturally took the shape of complicity. It sometimes happened that Dan's carts—those innocent carts laden with poultry, vegetables, or fish, which Job or Jephthah drove into Lyme—were stopped and searched. One would think that Dan was regularly warned, because nothing was ever found in them. If the revenue cutter chanced to look in at Rousdon Bay, the Dancing Polly was lying at anchor, without the least sign of an intended run, and Dan would be caulking the Chace Mary or mending fishing-nets, or painting the dingy, with a grave face and a twinkle in his eye.

With a fast boat like the Dancing Polly with four such handy boatmen as the crew who manned her, the chief danger was that of landing the cargo. It was desirable to know, before the run, where the revenue cutter was; this information was got by myself, or by one of the boys, from the boatmen of the cove at Lyme, or from the fishermen of Beer. She might have been heard of at Weymouth, or she might be lying in Bridport. Once, when we thought she was away up the Solent, she came out of Lulworth Cove, and chased Dan for three long days, so that he only got away without throwing his cargo overboard, by the swiftness of his heels and the providential inter-

position of a fog. We had to get news from Weymouth, from Swanage, Poole, Lymington, and Yarmouth, in the west; as from Beer, Sidmouth, Ladram Bay, and Dartmouth. The revenue cutter once ascertained to be out of the way, there was little or no danger of interference from any of the shore-going folk.

When all seemed safe as regards the excise, and a run was resolved on, it was brave to see the little craft, with Dan at the "hellum," Job and Jephthah in the bows, and Joshua 'midships, beating her way out of the little narrow bay, straight out into the blackness beyond—for Dan never started except at night, and when there was a moonless sky. I would stand on the beach, the wind blowing my hair about and the spray flying into my face, to get the last sight of the gallant boat. Then I would go home and stay there, quite alone, till they returned, in a couple of days or so, laden with the brandy in kegs. I never had any fear for them. Dan knew every inch of the French and English coasts, he could steer blindfold, he could find Rousdon Bay in the blackest night; he was not afraid, in his tight little craft, of any reasonable weather, provided only that when he landed there were no revenue men waiting to capture the hero of a hundred runs.

Dan was always a sailor, in man-

fog. We had to get  
Yemouth, from Swan-  
Lymington, and Yar-  
e west; as from Beer,  
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ner and dress; Job and Jephthah  
played two parts: when they wore  
corduroys and a smock they were  
farm-labourers, and slouched in  
their gait, lifting their feet heavily  
and swinging their shoulders, as  
those do who go much upon clay;  
when they were on board they  
were dressed like boatmen and  
they rolled like sailors. Joshua,  
on the other hand, played three  
parts. As a miller, he had the re-  
putation of being grasping and  
greedy of gain, but honest in his  
dealings. In this capacity he was  
always floury, like his men, and had  
it not been for the tar upon his  
fingers, you would say he had  
never smelt salt water. As a sail-  
or he was as daring as Dan, almost  
as skilful, and as hard to yield as  
Job and Jephthah. But he had a  
third character, which he reserved  
for Saturday evening and Sunday.  
Then he dressed himself in a black  
coat, and became a Primitive Me-  
thody; one of a certain very small  
body so styled by themselves, who  
met in a chapel about twelve feet  
square, and took turns to preach  
and pray. His methodism has no-  
thing to do with my story, except  
to show the masterful character of  
the man. He would be a leader;  
he wanted people to think as he  
told them, and he could only do  
this in a dissenting chapel. Dan,  
who accepted the authority of the  
Rev. Mr. Burden, and the Church,  
was, in his way, as religious as he  
was honest. There is nothing, he

frequently argued, against smug-  
gling, either in Bible or Prayer-  
book. At the four great festivals  
of the Church he received the  
Sacrament; he slept every Sunday  
afternoon over "Holy Living and  
Dying," and he kept, as I have  
said, the roof on the parish church.

It was among these people that  
I spent the first seventeen years of  
my life. Such education as I had  
was given me by the Rector at  
odd moments. I could read, but  
had few books, and those I knew  
by heart. They were Bunyan's  
Pilgrim's Progress, Robinson Cru-  
soe, and one or two more. Writing  
I learned by slow degrees; my  
spelling has never, I own, been  
correct, nor can I understand the  
fuss which is made about that ac-  
complishment. If the writer's  
meaning is clear, why object to  
the omission or the addition of a  
letter or two? There was little  
encouragement to literature in  
Rousdon Farm. Job and Jephthah  
had learned, like myself, to read  
and write, but as they never prac-  
tised either art, and supplemented  
memory only by chalk-marks on  
the cart, I suspect they had for-  
gotten both. Dan regarded writ-  
ing as useful for commercial pur-  
poses, and reading on the Sunday  
as an aid to devotion. In respect  
to other uses, there were instances  
which he had heard of where a  
passion for books actually led the  
victim, by imperceptible degrees,  
to the gallows. Certainly in those



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years there were many, many roads, to that dismal tree.

I did not read much, my duties at home were soon got through, the rest of my time I spent upon the water, alone or with Dan, and on the Undercliff. In the evening there was sewing. But all day long, and all the year round, rain or sunshine, I was in the open air, gathering flowers in the Holmbush fields, climbing among the bracken under the Pinhay cliffs, singing all alone in the woods upon the hill-sides, out upon the sea in the dingy, or, in summer, bathing and swimming where the rocks hid me from casual eyes which never chanced to pass that way. It was a lonely place facing a lonely sea; few ships ever sailed across that great bay save the heavy craft which brought coal from Wales, or the coasters which traded from port to port, or the fishing-craft from Lyme and Beer. I had the sea all to myself when I put out in the dingy, ran up the little sail, and sat in the stern, tiller in one hand and rope in the other, while the boat slipped through the short crisp waves with a murmurous whish, leaving its little white track behind, while my fancy ran riot, and I had visions, such as come to the young and innocent, of a golden and impossible future, lying among figures indistinct and misty.

Sometimes I went with Dan to Lyme, where one could buy things

and see the shops in the street and the ships in the cove. On Sunday evenings, in summer, one could sometimes go to Lyme church, which was surely the most remarkable and delightful church in the whole of England. To begin with, it was a church built on a staircase. You climbed up some of the steps and you were in the churchyard. More steps brought you to the porch, which was long and deep; at the end of it more steps again brought you to the line of the nave; half-way up the nave a short flight of steps took you to a higher level under the pulpit and reading-desk; a last climb landed you on the level of the chancel. I believe there were additional steps to the altar. This gradual rising of tier above tier produced a remarkable effect, especially if, as I did, you sat in one of the galleries. Wherever they could have a gallery they did; here one and there one; sticking them between pillars, so as to produce a general result, which, to the ignorant eye of a girl, was grand and delightful. One of the galleries was beautifully decorated with a death's-head and bones, and an appropriate text. And they sang hymns. They were taken very slowly, but they were sung to real tunes, which one could carry away and sing at the top of one's voice far out to sea in the little boat. The hymns were set to the music of a band consisting chiefly of stringed

shops in the street  
ships in the cove. On  
evenings, in summer, one  
sometimes go to Lyme  
which was surely the most  
and delightful church  
of England. To begin  
a church built on a  
You climbed up some  
and you were in the  
More steps brought  
orch, which was long  
at the end of it more  
brought you to the  
ave; half-way up the  
light of step took you  
level under the pulpit  
desk; a last climb  
on the level of the chan-  
there were additional  
altar. This gradual  
above tier produced a  
effect, especially if, as  
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ever they could have  
did; here one and  
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o of one's voice far  
e little boat. The  
t to the music of a  
chiefly of stringed

instruments, tuned stealthily be-  
tween the different parts of the  
service. This was all the music  
and these were all the tunes which  
I heard as a child.

As for the times, we were al-  
ways at war. During the whole  
of my childhood, and for a good  
many years afterwards, the talk  
was all of war. For five-and-  
twenty years England was fight-  
ing. On the south coast the war  
might at any moment become  
more than a rumour; there was  
no reason why a French privateer  
should not cross over and do what  
mischief she could. Every day,  
before breakfast, we all solemnly  
looked out to sea—Dan with his  
glass—to see if an enemy was  
hovering over the coast, and once  
we saw a naval action. The  
Frenchman was a privateer; the  
Englishman a brig of war carry-  
ing twelve guns. They ran side  
by side for awhile, firing ince-  
santly, the Englishman gradually  
reducing the distance. At last  
they came to close quarters, and  
our men boarded her. Oh what a  
sight! It was too far off for us to  
see the horrors of battle, the dead  
and wounded; but we could make  
out, when the smoke cleared away,  
that the Union Jack was run up  
where the French flag had been  
flying, and Dan solemnly, with  
tears in his eyes, thanked the God  
of Victory. It was a brave and  
gallant action; they made the  
commander of the brig a first-

lieutenant for it; then they sent  
him out to Jamaica, where they  
forgot him altogether, although  
he did plenty of other things quite  
as good. This was the way they  
used to treat our brave sailors.  
Thirty years afterwards he came  
home, still a first-lieutenant, and  
bald, by reason of the many men  
who had climbed over his head.

Heavens! how brave our men  
were, and what fights they fought!  
They cut out French ships under  
the guns of their own batteries.  
They engaged vessels double their  
own weight; whenever they saw  
an enemy's ship they attacked her.  
The papers were full of naval ac-  
tions, which were always victories.  
I never saw the papers, but I heard  
the news whenever Dan came  
back from Lyme. Buonaparte  
was going to invade England, and  
made enormous preparations; the  
whole country took up arms, young  
and old; the war-fever possessed  
the British bulldog. There was  
no fear in our hearts, nor any  
hesitation. Looking back upon  
that time, I can only feel that  
surely none other than the hand  
of God was upon us; how else  
could we, fighting against such  
odds as never any other nation  
encountered, have fought so brave-  
ly, and finished the struggle with  
so much honour?

## CHAPTER II.

## LOVE THE UNCONQUERED.

**I** HAVE always kept as a holyday the 14th of August in every year since the year 1803. It

is sacred to me for two memories—the first being that on this day I first saw my own gallant and true-hearted Will.

It was about half-past four in the afternoon. I was running down the crags by a way known only to myself, breast-high in bracken, jumping from stone to stone, singing at the top of my voice, with flying hair and outstretched arms, when I suddenly came upon Dan Gulliver and a stranger.

"I saw," said Will afterwards, when he became my sweetheart—"I saw a tall girl of sixteen, who might have been twenty, with blue eyes and an oval face, the sweetest face in the world. She carried a sun-bonnet in her hand, and she wore a tight fitting frock."

"If I had known who was coming," I said, "I should have put on my Sunday frock."

"Your Sunday frock!" he cried, in his foolish way; "why, what could be more lovely than my woodland nymph, flying to meet us, up to her arms in the fern, bare-headed, her hands filled with flowers, her eyes with smiles, and her pretty mouth with a song.

Sunday frock! Leave Sunday frocks to city girls.

See miss and madam lay their snares,  
Painted faces,  
Studied graces,  
All for catching unawares  
Flights of gamesome lovers."

But this talk came afterwards.

When I met them in the path, as I finished my run down the slope, I stopped short, shame-faced, being unused to the sight of strangers.

"Pleasance," said Dan, "this young gentleman is coming to stay awhile at the farm; can you help to amuse him, think you?"

"I assure Miss Gulliver," said the gentleman, taking off his hat to me, "that I shall give as little trouble as possible."

"The boys," said Dan, "can sleep at the cottage. Do'ee now, Pleasance."

This was the old man's way. I was to seem the mistress, who ought to have been the servant.

I turned, and led the way to the house in silence. Truth to say, I was not best pleased with the prospect of a strange man in the house. Like all wild things, I loved solitude. Dan carried a valise and the young man carried a wooden case.

It was not till after we got home, and I had brushed my hair, and put on another frock, and come down stairs again, that I saw what manner of man our guest was.

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presumptuous as to fall in love with him. What did I know about love? My heart leaped up, however, because I looked upon the most handsome and splendid man I had ever seen. To be sure I had seen but few. The gentlemen of Lyme Regis were mostly advanced in life, and more or less had bottle-noses, by reason of much rum.

This young gentleman was about twenty-two years of age; he was tall and rather slight in figure; his eyes were brown, and from the very first I saw that they were frank, honest eyes; his hair was brown and curly; his cheeks were burned by the sun; his fingers, I noticed, were long and thin; they were, in fact, the fingers of a musician.

His wooden case was lying on the table. I asked him if he would have it taken upstairs.

"If I am allowed," he said, "I should like to keep this case down here. And perhaps, Mr. Gulliver——"

"Call me Dan," said he; "I'm used to it. And this is my adopted daughter, Pleasance Noel."

"Dan, then, and Miss Noel——"

"Call me Pleasance," I said, imitating Dan, in order to show my good-breeding. "I am used to it."

"Pleasance, then. My name is William Campion. Perhaps you would let me play to you sometimes?"

In the case was a fiddle. This wonderful young man could play the

fiddle. Now of all the instruments of music which man has ever invented for drawing forth the soul of man, it has always seemed to me that the fiddle is the most efficacious. At the first stroke of the bow I jumped in my seat and clasped my hands. As he stood by the window and drew out the air softly and sweetly, my spirit hung upon the notes, and for the time I was in sweet heaven.

He only played one tune then. When he had finished it, he laid back the fiddle in its case. I noticed with what tenderness, as if he loved it.

"Did you like it, Pleasance?" he asked. "But I saw that you did."

Then I made tea, a luxury not of every day—Job and Jephthah, who did not like tea, and were modest, stayed in the farmyard among the pigs—and after tea, Mr. Campion, Dan, and I, all three went down to the bay and talked about boats. First we went aboard the Dancing Polly, and Mr. Campion praised her lines, and then we looked at the Chace Mary, and when there was nothing more to be said about either of these two crafts, we got into the dingy and went for a sail, I holding the tiller. At eight, after the sun had set, we got back again and went home. I remember that there was cold boiled hand of pork for supper, and that Job and Jephthah, who had polished up their faces with

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244

yellow soap till they shone like mirrors, came up bashfully, and sat side by side, eating vast quantities of pig, and saying never a word.

Supper ended, Dan lit his pipe, mixed his brandy-punch and, after courteously pressing the tobacco and the spirits on his guest, invited him to play something.

I jumped in my chair again when Mr. Campion laughed, and drew his fiddle out of the case once more.

He played half-a-dozen tunes. Now, on the violin, Mr. Campion was a magician. For my own part I was carried away into the seventh heaven from the very beginning. First, he played, "Farewell and adieu to you, Spanish ladies," which inspired one with a fine feeling of national pride and respect for seafaring Britons. Next he played, "Oh dear! what can the matter be?" a song just then quite new, at least to Dorsetshire folk. This made us just a little tearful, and put us in the right frame for "Early in the morning, just as the sun was rising." Then he played, "Within a mile of Edinburgh town;" the most delicious ditty I have ever heard, then or since. After that he played "Jack's the lad," the song which they have since made into the College Horn-pipe. It was then that Dan, who had been chiming in whenever he happened to know a word or two of the song, nodding his head, and beating time with his pipe, laid it

down, and standing up, solemnly executed something distantly resembling a sailor's hornpipe on the floor. Will went on playing it, with a laugh in his eyes, faster and faster, till the enthusiasm spread to Jephthah and Job, who looked at each other guiltily, and then softly arose and retired to the adjacent farmyard, where I saw them in the moonlight gravely dancing opposite each other where the straw was driest. Then Will changed the tune, and played, singing the words himself in a lusty tuneful baritone, "While the raging seas did roar." Dan caught the chorus and sang it with him. Heavens what an evening we had! Then he sang "Hearts of oak." Job and Jephthah came back for this, and steadied each other, as the song enjoined, with sympathetic shoulder-thwacks heavy enough to fell an ox.

Lastly, my own turn came. The musician stopped, and his expression changed. He looked thoughtfully for a moment, and then, still with his eyes fixed upon me, began to play an air, the like of which I had never heard or dreamed of; for it made my heart to beat, my brain to reel, my eyes to swim. Dan resumed his pipe, and drank a whole glass of brandy-punch; he did not care apparently for this kind of music; Job and Jephthah stole away noiselessly, and, I suppose, went to bed. I had a strange



standing up, solemnly something distantly re-sailor's hornpipe on the I went on playing it, gh in his eyes, faster still the enthusiasm Jephthah and Job, who ch other guiltily, and rose and retired to the myard, where I saw e moonlight gravely site each other where s driest. Then Will une, and played, sing- s himself in a lusty ne, "While the rag- roar;" Dan caught I sang it with him. an evening we had! "Hearts of oak." hah came back for ed each other, as the with sympathetic ks heavy enough to

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and delightful sense that this music was being played for myself alone; that the musician took this way of putting thoughts into my head which had never been there before. I felt a passionate yearning for something unknown. I was in some new place of light and beauty inconceivable; my spirit rose with a kind of rapture, I was out of the body, floating in the air: there were no words in which I could clothe this new sensation. I could have wept for very joy, but no tears came. Presently it seemed as if my feet were moving in cadence and my whole frame undulating with the waves of melody. I could bear it no longer, and should have fallen, but that Dan caught me with a "Steady, pretty, steady; going to sleep with the music in your ears?"

I was not going to sleep, indeed. But Mr. Campion ceased playing, and told me that it was a German dance.

Nearly all that night I lay awake, wondering what new world was this into which I had got a glimpse. And when I slept it was to dream of strange delicious things, clothed in shapes new and delightful.

It appeared next morning that Dan's idea of entertaining the guest was to hand him entirely over to me. All the others, to be sure, had work to do. He was easy to amuse when one got over the first shyness; and he was so good and thoughtful that the shy-

ness very soon disappeared. Certainly, I had plenty to show him; there were all kinds of sylvan ways; there was the Undercliff, where they had just been cutting the brown fern for litter, and left open spaces for fresh green grass to grow. It was covered, too, with its autumn robes. In August there were the delicate pale yellow flowers of the Traveller's Joy, the red berries of the rowan, the bunches of blackberries, as yet only red, the tall purple thistles, and the crimson fox-glove. It was something to have the Undercliff to show a stranger. Or we might walk along the cliff itself to Axemouth, Seaton and Beer; or we might go inland along Colway Lane to Up Lyme, where we could find valleys and woods, and broad stretches of corn-grown hillside; or we might go fishing in the calm evenings or early mornings; or we might up sail and slip along the coast to Lyme, Charmouth, or even Bridport, should the wind hold fair.

Surely, of all delightful companions that any girl had, mine was the most delightful. He was always happy; nothing ever ruffled his temper; he was satisfied with our simple way of life; he seemed to want nothing else than to go about all day long with me; he never tired of playing to us in the evening; he even encouraged my ignorant prattle, which must have seemed to him so silly, and

preferred hearing me talk to telling me stories of the great world.

He came in August, he stayed with us all through September and October; he came when the corn was ripening; he stayed after the corn was got in and even the cider apples gathered. I lived, for my part, in a fool's paradise, thinking it would last for ever.

The beginning of trouble came from Joshua Meech.

We were so happy, Dean and I, with our new friend, that we hardly noticed the strange fact that Joshua, who had been wont to spend at least one evening in the week with us, had only visited us once since Mr. Campion came. And that evening on which our guest played he sat looking glum and ill-tempered. One day in October, never dreaming that Mr. Campion was in any way associated with Joshua's ill-temper, I took him across the fields to show him Joshua's mill. It certainly was the prettiest of all mills; not one of the great towers which spread out long arms, and seem as if they were going to catch you up in the air, and carry you round and round till you fly off and are killed; not at all like one of them, but a sweet and lovely watermill.

First, there was a square building with a high-pitched thatched roof. It consisted of two parts, one being the mill and the other the cottage, in which Joshua lived, all by himself. In the mill was a

door and two windows, one above and one below. At the end of the cottage was an undershot wheel, twenty feet in diameter, which all day long went slowly round and round, while the water of the rivulet, brought along in a leat two feet wide, rolled melodiously over the edges of the buckets, and turned the great wheel by its weight. And while the water clashed and the wheel grunted, you could hear within the house the sound of toil and labour, the grinding, creaking, and grunting that belong to a mill. Nor was that all. At the back of the mill was an orchard, where the pink and the red cider apples looked pleasant—they could not look sweet. Beyond the orchard was a piggery, and then you came to a bed of a stream, which was dry in summer, save for a little green damp among the stones, by the side of which was a coppice of alder-trees, and behind the alders a dark, deep wood, into which you might peer all a summer's day and dream boundless things.

In front of the house the winter stream and the leat united and made a magnificent lasher, into which the water boiled and bubbled just like a pool below Niagara, only not quite so big. When the two streams were fairly joined and reconciled to the union, they ran off together over the stones in one bright and merry rivulet.

two windows, one above the other. At the end of the mill was an undershot wheel, twelve feet in diameter, which all day revolved slowly round and round, and the water of the rivulet fell along in a leat two feet deep, and fell melodiously over the buckets, and the great wheel by its motion, while the water fell, the wheel grunted, and the miller within the house toiled and laboured, the mill grunted, and grunting went on a mill. Nor was the back of the mill where the pink and white apples looked so bright, could not look on the orchard was a garden, when you came to a garden, which was dry and brown for a little green, and the stones, by the way, was a coppice of hazel behind the alders, and into which you went on summer's day and on other things.

house the winter was a great united and united lasher, into which the water boiled and bubbled below Niagara, and when the water fairly joined the union, they fell on the stones in the rivulet.

We found Joshua standing at the door: he was covered all over with flour, as becomes the sober, hard-working miller, looking as if his thoughts never ran on anything more venturous than sack of corn and the everlasting grunting of his waterwheel. When he saw us, however, his face clouded over, and instead of coming to greet us, he retired within the mill.

I ran to the door and called him out. He came, scowling at Will, who was seated on a trunk of a tree.

"Are you going to stay long in these parts, young gentleman?" he asked.

There was something in his tone which Will resented.

"Perhaps I shall," he said shortly.

"It depends, I suppose," said Joshua, "on how long you like to dangle about with a young girl. We don't like London ways in this part of the country."

Will flushed red.

"We will discuss this subject when the young lady is not present?" he said.

"I shall be glad of an opportunity," said Joshua slowly. "Why, there, that's spoke like a man. Maybe I can get round to Rousdon in the evening."

I ought to have known, but I did not, what this meant.

You see, it was a fighting time. If common men quarrelled with each other, or with gentlemen,

they had it out at once with fists or quarterstaff. Gentlemen fought with pistols. Friends and seconds saw fair play.

Will, in fact, was going to fight Joshua Meech.

"What does he mean?" I asked presently, when we had left our sulky Joshua, and were walking in the meadow beside the alder-trees. "What does he mean by dangle with a young girl? I am the young girl, I suppose."

"I suppose you are, Pleasance," he replied. "Sit down on this stile and I will tell you what he means."

I sat on the upper bar of the stile, Will on the second step, and he looked up in my face with those smiling, steadfast eyes of his, which always went straight to my heart.

"Joshua Meech means," he began, "that some men take a delight in stealing away girl's hearts, especially country-girls' hearts, and then leaving them."

I did not quite understand.

"Don't open your pretty blue eyes too wide, Pleasance," he went on; "I will explain by an illustration. Now listen:

"Ever so long ago there was a young girl, about sixteen years of age, your age, living in the country by the seaside, with a jolly old sailor and his two sons, just as you have been living. She was a pretty girl—as pretty—as pretty—as you. She had the same blue eyes, the

same sweet face, the same ruby lips, the same smile, and the same light brown curls, and I think she wore the same sort of straw hat."

"Oh Mr. Campion!" For all of a sudden I found out—myself.

"There was a man who lived not far from her, a man who had a mill. I think he was a jealous, austere creature, but he was in love with this girl."

What did he mean?

"Then there came from London a young man who carried a fiddle and played it. He was quite a commonplace young man, who had no virtues except that he was fond of his fiddle. He came into the country intending to be quite alone, to sail and fish, and make music all to himself. He found, instead of solitude, a paradise, peopled with one Eve."

It sounded very pretty, if I could only understand it.

"This young man found her society so delightful that he stayed on. Presently he began to feel as if he did not care ever to go away again—unless—unless she would go away with him."

Then I understood that he had been making up a little story about himself and me, and I wondered what else he meant. I suppose I looked bewildered.

"My dear, my dear, do you not understand me?" he caught both my hands, and pressed them to his lips. "Do you not understand me?"

I want you to promise to be my wife."

"Your wife, Mr. Campion? but you are a gentleman."

"Listen, little innocent; would you like me to go away?"

I shook my head, and the tears came into my eyes.

"Do you like being with me?"

"Yes," I answered, quite frankly, because there was nothing to conceal, "I like being with you very much."

"How should you feel if you knew that you would never see me again?"

I shuddered.

"I must go away, unless you bid me stay. You can only do that by promising to marry me."

"But what will Dan say?"

"Dan will agree. Say, am I to stay?"

I gave him one hand, but he took both.

"Stay, Mr. Campion, if you please."

Then he took me to his arms, and held me tight, and kissed me again and again on the lips, till I tore myself from him, abashed and confused.

"Now, you are all my own," he said, "and I am yours. We are pledged to each other. I will tell you exactly what we will do"—he had his whole plan complete in his head. "We will go up to London. You shall live with John Huntspill, my partner. You shall learn the things which you have

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you are now to my eyes alone, I  
will take you to my mother, and  
say to her: 'Mother, this young  
lady from Dorchester is going to  
be my wife.'

"Your mother!" My heart sank  
a little.

"Yes. By the way," he added,  
with a laugh, "she is very partic-  
ular about family and rank; what  
shall we say?"

"My father's rank was ship's  
carpenter," I said simply.

He laughed. "We will tell her  
the exact truth, and ask her if she  
would find a lovelier girl among  
the bluest blood. I forgot to tell  
you that my mother is blind."

Then holding my hand in his, he  
began to tell me all about himself  
and his mother.

He was an only child. His father  
was a city merchant, whom the  
king knighted during his year as  
lord mayor. He was Sir Godfrey  
Campion. His mother was a widow.  
She lived in the City, and told me  
in the square of Great St. Simon  
Apostle. He would be himself, in  
two years, by his father's will, no-  
minally the senior partner in the  
house of Campion & Co., of Lon-  
don, Bristol, and Jamaica. But  
John Huntspill would do the work.

"I should like to tell you another  
thing, my dear," he said. "My  
mother and I parted in anger. She  
—one must not think ill of one's  
mother—but she does not remem-

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ber that I am nearly twenty-three  
years of age. We quarrelled on  
account of my violin. She thinks  
a fiddle only fit for an Italian mu-  
sician, for a bear-leader, or for  
sailors ashore. Above all, she  
thinks it unsuited to the head of  
a City house. Perhaps it is, but  
then you see I never wanted to  
play the fiddle in the office. And  
then—well—then—there was a  
scene one evening. My dear mo-  
ther has a high spirit; and when  
she came to comparing her son—  
the fiddle-scraping son—with his  
late father, Sir Godfrey Campion,  
and when that son declared that  
the comparison was not fair, and  
one thing led to another; why—  
there is nothing strange in the fact  
that the son resolved to take his  
fiddle into the country for awhile.  
That is how I came here."

"Yes," I said, trying in my ig-  
norant, country way, to realize  
what all this meant—the lord may-  
or, knighthood, and the rest.

"Was your father an admiral?"  
I asked at length.

He stared for a moment, and  
then burst out laughing. Of course,  
he always laughed at everything.  
Years afterwards I asked him how  
it was he did not lose patience  
with so much ignorance.

"Lose patience?" he asked in  
his silly, delightful way, "it all  
helped to make me love you the  
more madly."

Now, it was not such very great  
ignorance, after all, because I had



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heard of admirals who were knighted. It was natural for me to think that all men who were called sir were admirals.

There is one thing which no woman can ever understand—what it is in her, and her alone, that makes a man fall down and worship her. I was the most simple and ignorant of country girls, and he was a gentleman. Yet he risked the happiness of his whole life on the chance that I should become what he imagined me to be already. My heart sinks still with a sort of humiliation to think how unworthy of that true and loyal gentleman I was. You will see, presently, of what things I was capable.

We went home at length, hand in hand, across the fields. Will said nothing to Dan, and we had our tea just as usual, only that I was silent.

In the evening Will went out, accompanied by the two boys. I had quite forgotten about Joshua, and wondered a little at his leaving me.

It was dark when they came back. Will had his left hand tied round with a pocket-handkerchief, his right eye was black, and he had got a gash across his cheek. He had been fighting Joshua Meech, and he had left, as I afterwards learned, that hero senseless on the ground.

Jephthah—or was it Job?—announced the battle and its result.

“He be give Joshua a drubbing,” he said, with a cheerful chuckle.

Now, no one in that house bore Joshua any grudge, and yet at the news, we all congratulated ourselves and the victor. I am almost ashamed now to think that Will was more glorious in my eyes than ever.

There could be no fiddling that evening, and Dan had a double ration of brandy-punch.

A fight in those days was a mere episode in a man's life. It might occur at any moment. Every body fought, and a gentleman learned boxing as part of his education.

But I was anxious that there should be no bad blood, and the next day I went over to the mill to see Joshua.

His face was a good deal more battered than Will's. It was evident that he had taken punishment manfully. He asked me to go into his own room for a talk.

“It is your politeness, I suppose,” I began, “that makes you fight a strange gentleman?”

“What's a fight?” he replied.

“That's nothing neither to him nor to me. He's a well-plucked one, he is, as ever handled a pair of fists. Which makes it worse.”

“What is worse, Joshua?”

“Now, no more fooling, Pleasance. You listen to me. No good comes of young gentlemen dangleing with young girls. Besides, I won't have it. He's got to go.”

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He's got to go."

"You won't have it?"  
"No," he said, banging his hand  
on the table. "I won't have it.  
There. You've got to be my wife."  
"I've got—to—be—your wife?"  
"Of course you have. I've told  
Dan long ago. Why, I've been  
saving up for it, these ten years.  
Next Easter Sunday I mean to  
marry you."

I only stared.

"Don't think, Pleasance, that a  
man can't love a girl because he  
hasn't got his mouth stuffed with  
fine words. Gar! it makes one  
sick to think of it. Iv'e loved  
you since you were a child. And  
he shall go."

"He shall not go, Joshua," I  
said. "And I will never, never  
marry you. Remember that."

"He shall go," he said, firmly.  
"One way or the other he shall  
go. Don't make me desperate,  
Pleasance. He shall go. Now  
you know what to expect, behave  
according."

I sprang to my feet and rushed  
out of the cottage. The man's set  
lips and steady eyes frightened  
me.

I told Will. But he laughed at  
my fears. What was Joshua to  
him? At the most there could  
only be another fight.

Joshua came no more to the  
farm, and I did not see him again  
till the trouble came upon me and  
mine.

And now I must leave the plea-  
sant time, when every day brought

some new happiness and some  
fresh brightness with it, and come  
to the story of that trouble.

It was partly my own fault.

One day—we had been sailing  
to Ladram Bay and back in the  
little boat; we had just beached  
her, and were sitting on the peb-  
bles hand in hand.

"What does Dan do," asked  
Will, "with two boats?"

"The Chace Mary is the fishing-  
boat," I replied, "the Dancing  
Polly is for the runs to France."

"The what?" cried Will.

"The runs over for the brandy,  
you know. Why, she is the fast-  
est boat that ever crossed the  
Channel."

Will listened with a bewildered  
face. Presently he laughed.

"So Dan is a smuggler, is he?  
Crafty old man!"

"Why," I said, with pride,  
"everybody knows that Dan is  
the boldest smuggler along the  
coast. They've given up trying  
to catch him now."

"Oh! And Job and Jephthah?"

"They go too, of course."

"And—and the jealous amo-  
roso, Don Joshua, does he go  
too?"

"Yes, he goes too. They all  
four go."

Will whistled.

"Shade of my sainted father!"  
he said. "Was it for this that you  
brought your son up in pious  
hatred to the illicit traffic which  
interfered with your own gains?"

I did not understand one word of what he said.

"I will explain," he said. "My father made his fortune and mine chiefly by rum. Rum is a rival to brandy. Great numbers of the happy children of Ham—who, as my mother believes, are by Divine ordinance subject to the children of Japhet—toil in Jamaica for the house of Campion and Co. We provide the British public with red noses, speckled noses, bottle-noses, gout, and chalk-stones in the hands. That is our work in the world. We flog slaves, in order that Britons may get drunk on health-giving rum. And we pay duty. What are we to think of a man who runs over brandy, which may be sold cheaper than rum, and is more wholesome? How do you think I have been trained to regard such a man? And now to feel that I have not only been staying in such a man's house, but that I am engaged to his adopted daughter—and that daughter the sweetest girl in the world! Lady Campion, what will you say to it?"

### CHAPTER III.

#### A LUCKY RUN.

**F**ROM the moment Will heard about the smuggling he began to get restless and would fol-

low Dan down to the beach, and talk while he looked after the boat. I knew that he was pumping Dan adventures out of him—a process by no means difficult. Dan's anecdotes were chiefly of narrow escapes; not from revenue cutters or privateers, so much as from sea-fogs. Once in a thick fog he nearly put straight into Bridport Harbour, there being at the time only a light breeze from the south-east, and a revenue cutter, armed and manned, lying within the two piers, ready to give him and his cargo a warm welcome. Another time he had to heave overboard the whole of his cargo, almost under the very nose of his pursuers. He knew the whole of the French coast, from Dunkerque to St. Malo, and was known in every port. He would drop along the shore, hugging the land, so as to look as much as possible like a fishing-smack, till he arrived at his destination; when you may be sure, he took very little time to load and go away again. Or there were tales of heavy seas and stiff sou'westers. Dan was sixty years of age or thereabouts at this time, and his memory carried him back for half a century of smuggling. His father before him, and his grand-father before him, had been yeomen of Rousdon, like himself; and, like himself, mainly dependent on the illicit trade.

Now, there was hardly anything more likely to excite the

an down to the beach, and while he looked after the boats that he was pumping Dan's pursues out of him—a process means difficult. Dan's means were chiefly of narrow ; not from revenue cutters, so much as from sea-Once in a thick fog he put straight into Bridport ; there being at the time a light breeze from the south- a revenue cutter, armed and, lying within the two, ready to give him and his warm welcome. Another had to heave overboard of his cargo, almost un-ry nose of his pursuers. the whole of the French Dunkerque to St. Malo, known in every port. drop along the shore, the land, so as to look as possible like a fishing- he arrived at his desti- en you may be sure, he little time to load and gain. Or there were vy seas and stiff sou'- an was sixty years of eabouts at this time, ory carried him back entury of smuggling. before him, and his before him, had been ousdon, like himself ; self, mainly depen- licit trade. was hardly any- kely to excite the

imagination of a town-bred youth than a tale of a successful and hazardous run. The romance, such as it was, of highwaymen was over. There were still plenty of them, and they were always changed when they were caught ; so that they were not without some glory. But, considered as heroes, they had had their day. The degenerate successors of Claude Duval were either desperate murderers, like the Blacks of Waltham, or they were poor, commonplace, ragged footpads. But the smuggler—the man who encountered the dangers of war, and storm, and of the revenue officers—was still a hero. So that Dan leaped at once, in the estimation of Will, from a good-natured, cheerful old sailor to the level of a sea-king. And this, despite the young man's early training and prejudice.

Then came evenings in which, after the violin had discoursed, we sat round the fire and talked of nothing else but old trips and their results. Countless were the questions put by Will—questions as to the French coast, the French people, their ways, and their manners ; as to the boat, and the navigation of the Channel ; as to the danger and the delight of running fifteen knots an hour, everything made snug and taut, carrying all canvas, with heavy seas washing over the gallant little craft. I never thought what might happen. I had lived so long in an atmo-

sphere of carelessness to danger that I had quite ceased to believe in any danger. And when Will begged Dan to take him too when he made another run, I laughed and clapped my hands, to think how he would enjoy it.

Dan made difficulties. He said it was not a young gentleman's work ; that his lady mother might get to hear of it ; that things might happen ; that he should never be easy in his mind afterwards if anything did happen. Finally, over-persuaded by the eagerness of the young man, he acceded to his request.

We were then in the cold evenings, about the middle of October, and in the last few days of a waning moon. The weather was fine and open, with a steady south-westerly breeze springing up most nights towards sunset, and lasting till late the next morning. Dan went over to the mill to consult with Joshua, who readily resigned his place to Will, on the condition of not losing his place in the profits, should the venture be successful. I took this kindly of Joshua. I thought he must have passed into a better frame of mind, although he had not been once to the house since the day he threatened me.

Everything being arranged, and the weather favourable, they went on board at eight in the morning. I was in the dingy, carrying things backwards and forwards ; and when Dan was satisfied that nothing had

PR 4  
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PXX

been forgotten, I dropped into the little boat, and sat in it, watching the Dancing Polly slip out of the bay and glide into the darkness, while Will leaned over the taffrail and waved a farewell to me.

It was nothing unusual for me to sleep alone in the house. There was no danger of robbers in so secluded a spot as Rousdon, and there was always a sense of protection in the fact of old Isaac Agus and his wife sleeping in the cottage hard by. I had no fears for myself. Only, somehow, things were different now. I had left off thinking of myself, and thought, all day and all night, of Will. That night, for the first time, I was timid. I thought of the little boat sailing across the black Channel to the enemy's coast. I conjured up the dangers. Buonaparte might catch them; he was at Boulogne then, preparing for the invasion of England, with every ship, craft, boat of any kind which he could collect together. The Dancing Polly might be captured by a privateer; they might be arrested on the French coast, they might be wrecked. I thought of every danger except the one most likely to happen, that they might meet their difficulties on the return voyage. For the first time in my life I was afraid, and while I sat before the fire conjuring up the ghosts of possible disasters, I heard a step outside, the latch was lifted, and

Joshua Meech showed himself the door.

I thought he had been drinking. His eyes were haggard and bloodshot—those eyes of his which were too close together and too small; his face was distorted, and his fingers worked nervously together.

"They are gone?" he asked, sitting on Dan's settle, with a sort of groan.

"Yes," I replied, fearing he was come for no good. "They put out at eight. Now, Joshua, if you have anything to say, have done with it at once and go."

"I've got this to say," he replied hoarsely. "I've been trying to put you out o' my mind, and I can't. Who's Mr. Campion, that he's to come here and take away my girl?"

"I never was your girl, Joshua."

"You should have been. I'd set my heart on it. And you shall be yet. There never was a thing that I wanted, as I did not get. I've always looked to marry you and nobody but you, and I will yet."

"Will you?" I laughed. "Never."

"Don't think I shall be an unkind husband, my pretty," he said, with a sudden change of voice and manner. "I love you too well. I shall wrap you up warm and give you nothing to do, only make yourself happy."

"Now, Joshua," I said, "go. This is enough foolishness for one night. I am going to marry Mr.

a Meech showed himself at Campion. Do you hear? I am going to be his wife."

"If you won't listen to fair words," he said, springing to his feet, "listen to foul. I've given you one more chance. It's your last. Will you give up that young popinjay?"

"No, I will not. Go!"

"I've warned you," he said, "and I'm desperate. Whatever happens, mind, it will all be on your own head. Whatever happens, you done it."

I had no suspicion, not the least shadow of suspicion, of what he meant. If Joshua's anger made me fear anything, it was that he might attempt some desperate deed of personal violence. At the same time, I was disquieted, and I longed for the return of the boat.

They sailed at eight, as I have said. If the breeze continued steady, they might reach the coast of France in the morning. Supposing that all went well, they would receive their cargo in a few hours, and should be back in the early morning of the following day—say from one to three o'clock, before daybreak. But that depended entirely on the wind.

All next day I was in a kind of fever. I could fix my thoughts on nothing. I said to myself: "Now they are stowing away the kegs; now Will is laughing with the Frenchmen—of course he would laugh wherever he was;

now Jephthah and Job are solemnly receiving the brandy; now Dan is keeping one eye upon the sea, and another on the land; now he is thinking what sort of a run over he will have; now they have started: now they are on the open sea; now"—but here my mind grew giddy, and I could follow them no longer.

What a long and dreary day that was! I who had never before minded being solitary, thought each hour dragged itself along more slowly than its predecessor. I went out in the little boat, but it was only to strain longing eyes across the water to see if haply I could discern the white sails of the Dancing Polly. But there was nothing on the ocean, and presently I rowed languidly home again, and tried to think out somehow the life that was before me. But that was difficult, because I did not know what a lady was like.

Only five in the afternoon! the whole evening and half the night before me yet! I went into the yard and talked to Isaac Agus. He said the wind was favourable, but it would freshen in the night; and then I went back to the house, as it was getting dark and chilly, lit the fire, and sat down before it, thinking.

I was in that mood when things inanimate seem to be things alive. Dan's pipe seemed to look at me with a sort of longing for Dan himself. Will's violin in the open



case seemed endowed with eyes which gazed upon me and said: "Where is he, the master?" The very chairs had a sad and foreboding look. I was overcome with the shadow of impending evil.

At eight I could bear it no longer, and went to bed. The wind had freshened by this time, and was blowing freely among the boughs and branches. But it came from the right quarter, and it would have to be a big breeze to keep the Dancing Polly out of port when Dan wanted to make it.

Tired with the anxiety and solicitude, I fell asleep the moment my head touched the pillow. That was partly from habit. I always did. It was the last night that I should ever fall into the sweet childish custom.

When I awoke from confused dreams of trouble, which took no intelligible shape, it was still in the depth of night. There was no such thing in those days as matches, and the striking of a light by means of the tinder-box was no easy matter. Yet I could not sleep any more. My nerves were like quicksilver. I sprang from my bed, dressed hurriedly in the dark, tied a thick shawl round my head and neck, and felt my way downstairs into the open air in front of the house.

The night was absolutely black. Clouds had come up over the sky, and there was not a ray of star-

light nor a glimmer on the sea. It was only possible to make out on the left the steep outline of Pinhay cliff, and on the right a little of the long line of rock. Nothing else. But the wind blew fresh into my face, and I heard the roar of the waves dragging down the shingle and rolling it up again, and that was companionship to me.

I sat there in front of the house, watching the darkness and thinking. It was better to be out in the open, listening to the voice of the waves, than boxed up in a bedroom, a prey to every sort of fear.

Presently I arose and went out in the dark, down the steep path that led to the beach. I knew every step, and needed no light to guide me over the rough way. But about half-way down I heard another step on the path below me—the step of one person. It was too dark to see anything, but I thought of Joshua. It must be Joshua come to help unload the cargo. Natural that he should come to look after the venture in which he had a share. I had no desire to speak with him, so I stayed where I was, stepping off the path, and sat down on the hillside to wait. And then—good heavens! what did it mean? there came more steps, steps in the distance, steps in the road above, the confused tramp of many feet upon the stones of the rough lane which led from Axemouth to Rousdon. Whose could these be? And what could

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they want, coming to Rousdon Bay  
at three in the morning.

I was standing on a ledge of rock  
overhanging the path from the  
house to the beach. By lying  
along the ledge I could look over  
the heads of these men as they  
came down the hill, and almost  
touch them. I waited while they  
passed by the silent house. They  
did not stop there; evidently they  
had no business with its occupants;  
and then a pang of horror struck  
my heart, for I reflected that I was  
the only occupant; and although  
they might have no business with  
me, they might have with those  
who ought to have been there that  
night. I lay down on the rock and  
cautiously looked over through the  
branches of a bramble.

It was not so dark but I could  
distinguish the figures of the men  
as they came down the zig-zag  
path, and slowly felt their way  
along the steep and narrow way  
beneath me. It was not so dark  
but I could count that there were  
sixteen of them, and I could hear  
the clash of arms. Then I knew,  
without being told or wanting to  
see any more, what they were and  
what was their errand.

They were the revenue men;  
they had got intelligence of Dan's  
run, they were come to catch him  
at the moment of landing, in the  
very act of running his cargo a-  
shore.

I thought, by the feel of the air  
and the look of the sky, that it

must be near upon three o'clock—  
say an hour and a half before day-  
break. That is to say, it was the  
very time which Dan would choose,  
had he a favourable wind, for  
landing. And the wind was fa-  
vourable—a steady strong south-  
wester, before which the Dancing  
Polly would fly. There could be  
no doubt that he was off the coast  
already.

It seemed to me that there was  
just one chance—and only one.  
The revenue men were all down on  
the beach, at the west side of the  
bay, under the rocks which were  
carried away afterwards in the  
great landslip. Suppose I could  
get, unseen, to the point of land  
which ran out—just a little point  
—on the east, and shout an alarm  
at the moment when the Dancing  
Polly neared the mouth of the  
bay.

It was the only chance. I knew  
every rock, and ledge, and stone  
round the place. I had no need  
to get down by the path. I slid,  
jumped, and crept, working my  
way round the bay, so as to get to  
the point unnoticed.

That was easy. I daresay the  
men were all half-asleep; the night  
was very dark, and my figure  
could hardly be made out against  
the black masses of rock and over-  
hanging brambles. I arrived at  
the point, and crouched behind a  
stone. I sat watching intently  
the black waves close at my feet  
and the black sky above me.

It grew cold, as it always does before the dawn, but I felt nothing: in the intense moments of life one does not think of such things. I prayed that Dan might be late, and that the day might break, so that he should be able to see me before he made his port. For, once in the bay, which was, as I have said, but a tiny creek, there was no room to turn, and the opportunity would be lost.

Alas! that hope failed.

While I sat watching, and almost before I had time to make her out, the *Dancing Polly* came up out of the blackness of the night, steering straight for the mouth of the bay.

I sprang up and shrieked, and waved my arms.

"Back, Dan, back; hard-a-port!"

It was no use. Dan saw me on the point, but her bows were already in the creek. Job and Jephthah ran down the canvas, and the boat grounded on the beach.

The *Dancing Polly* had made her last run.

I ran round the bay for my life, springing from stone to stone in the dark, crying "Dan, Dan, they are waiting for you. Run, oh, run, run! Will, run!"

There was a shout, a rush, the sudden flashing of dark-lanterns. "In the King's name," shouted a rough voice, "surrender!"

When I got round they had secured their prisoners. All four

were handcuffed, and the men were standing round them in a ring. I broke through them, still shrieking my useless warning, and fell crying upon Dan's neck.

"I heard you, my pretty," said the poor old man, "but it was too late. You ~~done~~ your best, but it was too late."

I hugged him and kissed him, crying and weeping. Then I remembered Will.

"He is a passenger," I said to the officer; "let him go. He only went to look on. He is a stranger here. He is not a smuggler, he is a gentleman."

"He is my prisoner," said the officer, "and must go with the rest. Fall in, men. Ready! March!"

The men had their cutlasses drawn, but there was no bloodshed, as there was no resistance. Dan was not one of the desperadoes who carried pistols, and arranged beforehand for an armed band of villagers to help him in landing the cargo. Moreover, resistance to the king's officers, in those days, meant death.

I followed the procession up the path. When we arrived in front of the house—poor deserted house, never again to receive all its occupants!—Dan asked permission for a halt.

"Pleasance, my pretty," said Dan, "go and bring out a glass of brandy for this gentleman, and one all round for these brave lads and

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"I know, I know," said the offi-  
cer, laughing—it was Captain Pol-  
lard, R.N. "Well, we will halt for  
the brandy."

I served them all, beginning  
with the officer, and going from  
him to the prisoners. It was now  
daybreak, and, in the cold grey  
light, I recognized all their faces.  
I knew every one of them. I had  
seen them at Bridport, at Seaton,  
and elsewhere, when I went to look  
out for the revenue cutter. One  
of them was a Lyme man, a cousin  
of John Beer, the barber.

"There," said Dan, when the  
brandy had gone round, "now go  
in, my pretty, and get to sleep, and  
don't fret. Where are we going,  
sir?"

"To Lyme first, then to Brid-  
port. After that, I suppose you  
will be sent up to Dorchester to  
take your trial."

"I shall walk to Lyme with you,"  
I said.

No opposition was made. Ar-  
rived at the high-road, the prison-  
ers were made to walk together in  
the middle, all handcuffed, and  
guarded by the men with drawn  
cutlasses. I noticed that they all  
tried to march next to Dan, and to  
whisper in his ear. The whispers  
were friendly expressions of sym-  
pathy and regret.

"How did they know I should  
run into Rousdon Bay?" asked  
Dan of one of them.

The man shook his head. He  
knew nothing about it. Some in-  
former," he supposed, with a mur-  
dered curse against all inform-

I walked beside Will. He  
trying to face the situation, which  
was very serious.

"I shall be committed for trial  
with the rest, Pleasance. Be brave,  
my girl; it will be only a term of  
imprisonment, no doubt. We shall  
fight it through. But my mother  
must not know."

"Oh Will, they won't send you  
to prison?"

"I doubt they must, my dear. I  
must think what is best to be done  
for all of us, as well as for myself.  
You would not like me to escape  
at the expense of this poor old man,  
would you?"

There was no reply possible to  
this. Of course I would not, in my  
right mind. Just then, however,  
it seemed as if even Dan might go,  
provided my Will could be got out  
of the scrape.

We marched down the steep hill  
which leads into Lyme at about  
half-past five. The little town was  
sound asleep. When we reached  
the house of Mr. Mallock, Justice  
of the Peace, a halt was called, and  
the officer began to knock lustily  
at the door.

His worship was not dressed.  
Could we come later on?

We could not; the case was im-  
perative. His worship must be  
good enough to get out of bed and  
receive us at once.

PR4  
T83  
127  
P24

We all trooped into the narrow hall, and stood there together, waiting for about ten minutes, when the magistrate came slowly down stairs, wrapped in a dressing-gown, wearing a nightcap instead of a wig, and grumbling as he slowly descended the stairs. He was a portly old gentleman with purple cheeks, eyes which might be described as goggle, and full lips. I knew him for one of Dan's best customers. The hue of those cheeks was not due to the fresh air and exercise, but to port and old French brandy.

The narrow hall was nearly dark, lit only by a single tallow candle, carried by the maid who admitted us. The worthy justice looked around him with angry wonder.

"Now, gentlemen," he said, "what is this? Why is a gentleman to be pulled out of his bed on a cold morning, before day-break? Is Buonaparte landed? Have you got a French spy? Well—who is in command of you?"

"I am, Mr. Mallock, if you will allow me to speak," said Captain Pollard.

"Allow you, sir—I am waiting for you. I am up at this ungodly hour on purpose to hear you speak. Mary, go bring a pair of candles to the dining-room. Now, sir, speak."

"I am Lieutenant Pollard, Mr. Mallock, and ——"

"Oh Pollard—I am sorry I did not recognize you. What with the darkness here—Mary, do fetch those lights—and the confusion of one's wits at this disturbance—pray excuse me. What does it mean, Pollard? We were wishing for you last night over as good a glass of brandy as ever Dan——"

Here the captain interrupted him with great alacrity.

"I am here, Mr. Mallock, officially, as officer in command of his majesty's revenue cutter, The Teazer. These are my men; these four are my prisoners. Prisoners, step forward!"

"Dan Gulliver!" cried the magistrate as the lights were brought, and he could see our faces, "you a prisoner? Dear me, dear me!"

"I ask for the prisoners to be committed for trial, at the next Dorchester assizes, on a charge of smuggling. We caught them in the act."

"Ta—ta—ta! Fair and easy," said the magistrate. "You forget, sir, that I am to hear the case. This way—this way. Oh Dan Gulliver! what a blow! what a blow for all of us!"

He led the way into the dining-room, where was his great chair of justice, in which he placed himself.

"Caught, sir, landing a cargo of brandy in Rousdon Bay," said the officer. "Do you wish to hear evidence?"

"Evidence, sir? Of course I



Pollard—"I am sorry I did not recognize you. What with business here—Mary, do fetch the keys—and the confusion of the night at this disturbance—excuse me. What does it mean? We were wishing for the best night over as good a glass of brandy as ever Dan—" The captain interrupted with great alacrity.

Here, Mr. Mallock, officer in command of the revenue cutter, The *These* are my men; these are prisoners. Prisoners, prisoners!"

"Gulliver!" cried the magistrate, the lights were brought, to see our faces, "you dear me, dear me!" The prisoners to be tried, at the next assizes, on a charge of piracy, we caught them in

"Fair and easy," said the magistrate. "You forget, to hear the case. In my way. Oh Dan, a blow! what a blow!"

He led them into the dining-room, his great chair, and he placed him-

"Landing a cargo of opium on Bay," said the magistrate, "I wish to hear

"Of course I

wish to hear evidence, and all the evidence you have to offer I can assure you. Do you think that respectable people—yeomen—substantial farmers, like my friend Dan Gulliver and his sons—are to be hauled off to prison on your ipse-dixit? Ta—ta—ta! call your evidence."

There was a general smile at the mention of Dan's occupation. Everybody of course, knew exactly what his calling was. Even the officer, Lieutenant Pollard, drank no brandy except what came from Dan's secret cellars.

One after the other, the men were called forward by the lieutenant. Each deposed the same thing. They had marched to Rousdon Bay by order of the captain, meaning Lieutenant Pollard; they waited under shelter of the cliff from two o'clock till four, or thereabouts; then the Dancing Polly sailed into the bay, and they captured the crew consisting of the four prisoners.

When the lieutenant had called half-a-dozen witnesses, the justice asked him if he had anything else to depose.

"Nothing more," replied the officer. "Isn't that enough? You can hear the same story from the whole sixteen."

"No, sir," said the magistrate—and I thought I saw a twinkle in his eye as he raised the important objection—"no, sir; it is not enough. You have proved to me that Dan

Gulliver and the three other prisoners were on board a boat which you believe to be, and which, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, we may assume to be, the Dancing Polly. You had an undoubted right, as an officer of His Majesty's revenue, to board that vessel. Where, in my opinion, you exceeded your duty was in seizing the prisoners; for you have not proved that there was anything on board to justify that violent measure. Prove smuggling, sir, or I shall let the prisoners go, and dismiss the case."

There was a sensation in the court. The officer looked down abashed. He had actually, in his zeal to seize a well-known and notorious smuggler, omitted the most necessary portion of his case—proof of the contraband carriage. He was actually so eager to bring his prisoners to the magistrate, that he forgot to carry with him his *pièces de conviction*.

"Under the circumstances, therefore," said the justice, with a great sigh of relief, "I shall dismiss the prisoners, unless you can at once produce evidence of smuggling."

Dan smiled. Will laughed aloud. Job and Jephthah nudged each other with their elbows, and became solemn beyond what is natural in young men. Lieutenant Pollard looked, in fact, if one can say so, of a gallant officer, who afterwards fell fighting the battles of his country, foolish.



"I could send back to Rousdon Bay," he said, "and cause to be brought kegs from the cargo of the Dancing Polly."

"Tush, man!" said the justice. "Who is to prove that those kegs were there when you boarded the craft?"

The revenue men looked at each other and laughed, glad to find that Dan Gulliver was going to escape their friend and greatest enemy. Only the captain looked disconcerted.

"And now," said Mr. Mallock, rising from his judicial throne, "we may dismiss this case. I hope, Pollard, the next time you drag me out of bed in the middle of the night, it will be with a better case than this. Dan Gulliver, the next time you go fishing in the Dancing Polly, you had better ask Captain Pollard to go with you. And now, I think, I shall go up stairs and have my sleep out."

We all thought the case was over and the cause won, when a young fellow, one of the sixteen, Skirling by name—he was a Weymouth man, no man nearer than Weymouth would have willingly testified against Dan—stepped forward and spoke, with many stammers and with much hesitation.

"Beg your honour's pardon. I broached one of they kegs in the dark. I filled this here bottle"—he held out a flat bottle, two-thirds emptied—"with John Beer there"—everybody looked reproachfully

at John Beer, the cousin of our Lyme barber—"and we drank together."

"Swear this man," said the justice, sitting down again.

They gave him the oath, and he repeated his evidence. The worthy magistrate tried to cross-examine him; but it was useless. The presence of the brandy could not otherwise be accounted for.

Then they called on John Beer, and that young fellow, with blushes and much unwillingness, was fain to confirm the statement.

The justice of the peace made no further opposition.

"It must be," he said, with a choke in his voice. "It is in the hope, Dan Gulliver and you others, Job Gulliver, Jephthah Gulliver, and William Campion, all described as common mariners, that you will have a speedy deliverance, and quickly return to your—your farming and the rest of it, that I sign this document. The law is uncertain. Times are hard. Honest men cannot be spared. Ah, it is a terrible misfortune! And at this juncture, too, when good brandy is almost not to be had, and my own cellar, I regret to say, entirely empty."

So they were all committed to trial, and bail refused.

Early as it was, the whole population of Lyme was in the streets to witness, in sympathy and sorrow, the departure of Dan Gulliver and his sons—caught at last

in Beer, the cousin of our barber—"and we drank in his honor."

"Hear this man," said the justice, sitting down again.

"I gave him the oath, and he gave his evidence. The worthy justice tried to cross-examine it, but it was useless. The proof of the brandy could not be accounted for."

"They called on John Beer, a young fellow, with blushes and an unwillingness, was faint on the statement."

"The justice of the peace made no opposition."

"I must be," he said, with a faint voice. "It is in the hands of Gulliver and you others, Mr. Jephthah Gulliver, Mr. Campion, all decent common mariners, that have a speedy delivery and quickly return to your homes and the rest of it, with this document. The justice said, 'Times are hard. I cannot be spared. A terrible misfortune! A juncture, too, when I am almost not to be in my own cellar, I regret it very much.'"

"I am all committed to you, and refused."

"I was, the whole population was in the streets with sympathy and sorrow for the capture of Dan Gulliver—caught at last

—for Dorchester jail. Loud were the lamentations, and deep were the curses which were uttered on the unknown informer who had wrought this evil. They put us in a waggon and we drove off—no one refusing to let me go too—to Bridport and Dorchester; the dreariest journey I ever made in my life, except one even more sorrowful, which was to come later."

There happened, after the reluctant justice had granted his warrant, a very strange thing, and one which caused the sides of all Lyme Regis to shake with laughing. We heard the news ourselves two days afterwards.

Captain Pollard, ashamed of his own haste, which was almost the cause of a miscarriage of justice, despatched four of his men to seize the cargo and the boat, and to bring them round to the cove at Lyme. Both boat and cargo were the prize of the captors; and a very tidy haul the prize would prove.

The men, by their own account, lost no time in marching back to Rousdon. It was about eight o'clock when they got to the farm. Here they found Isaac Agus at work in the yard, and his wife in the dairy, and no one else about the place. Unsuspectingly they descended the hill and boarded their prize.

The Dancing Polly was empty.

The whole of her cargo was gone. Not one keg left; not a

single trace of any brandy at all; the prize snatched from under their very eyes.

The men looked at each other aghast. It had been grief to most of them to arrest old Dan at all; he had ever been a good friend to all who wanted a little cheap spirit; but this laudable repugnance to perform the more ungrateful portion of their duties was moderated by the prospect of a prize. The Dancing Polly, as she stood with all her gear, was worth something, no doubt. And then there was the brandy.

They looked at each other in dismay. Where was it? Without a word they turned and climbed the hill to the farm. Here Isaac Agus was placidly engaged among the pigs.

He was hard of hearing and slow of speech, but at length he was made to comprehend that unknown persons had been at work in the bay since daybreak, and that he was wanted to say who they were.

He knew nothing. At the usual hour—that is, before daybreak—he had left his bed, and since then had been busy in the farmyard. The absence of Dan and the boys gave him no concern, because it frequently happened; and he was, in his slow way, amazed to learn that they were all then, with the stranger, on their way to Dorchester prison.

But he knew nothing. The sim-

ple look of the old man, his deafness, his slowness of comprehension, convinced the men that he knew nothing. Then they returned to the bay, and stood sadly contemplating their empty prize. "Sure for certain," said one, "folks 'll laugh at us."

"Well, they may," said another.

Then nature, which brings relief in different ways, gave these honest fellows theirs in a volley of oaths, a broadside of oaths, fired by all together. They swore at the unknown informer, in the first instance for causing them to meddle with Dan Gulliver at all; and then at the unknown brigands who had robbed the cargo; and then at the captain, for being in such a mighty hurry; and then at things in general.

Before they had anything like finished swearing—so, that is, as to feel easy and comfortable in their minds about the past, and philosophic as to the future—the thought occurred to one of them that one of the thieves may have been the fourth partner in the firm, Joshua Meech, of Up Lyme Mill.

It would be an excellent conclusion to the business to find that heroic smuggler in the act of carting the kegs, or stowing them away in the mill. They lost no time in marching over the fields to the mill.

It was ten o'clock when they got there; the wheel was slowly turn-

ing, grumbling and grunting as it went round; the water splashed into the deep dark hole below; the grinding of the upper and the nether-stone were heard within; an empty waggon was standing by the door, ready to be loaded; and at the door was Joshua Meech himself.

His coat and flat cap, his boots, his face were covered with flour. He asked them roughly what they wanted.

When he heard that Dan was arrested, he seemed to reel and catch at the doorway.

When he heard that the cargo had all disappeared, he laughed, but without merriment. And then he invited the men to search the mill.

There was nothing there.

"And so my uncle is caught," he said, "and the boys with him?"

"Ay, ay, all of them."

"Life is uncertain," said the Methody, "we are like the grass. Poor Job and Jephthah! And there was a young man with them. Was he, too, caught?"

"All caught."

"Was there any resistance?"

"The old man and his son, they were quiet enough," replied one of the men. "The other young fellow—he kicked and fought a bit."

"Did he now?" cried Joshua, with much interest. "Did he? That was rash. Because resistance to the king's officers is death. That's a hanging matter. The

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be hanged. Dear me! How very  
ad!"

He smacked his lips as if he  
liked the thought. Some people  
do like to dwell on melancholy  
subjects.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE KING'S CLEMENCY.

**I**T was late in the even-  
ing when we got to  
Dorchester. The pris-  
on gates—above them  
hung, as a warning to evil doers, a  
set of rusty fetters and handcuffs  
—closed upon all that I called dear,  
and I was left outside.

The young man, John Beer, the  
same whose appetite for brandy  
had done us so much mischief,  
found me a lodging with respec-  
table people; and I waited in  
trouble of soul for the morning.

At nine, after waiting outside  
for two long hours, I obtained ad-  
mission to the prison. I went in  
trembling, and expected to see the  
prisoners jangling their chains in  
despair. I looked for sighs and  
prayers, for the tears of repentance  
and the groans of remorse. I found  
nothing of the kind. The court-  
yard was half full of men who  
were all laughing, talking, drink-  
ing, and singing. Some of them  
wore fetters. One man alone was

dejected. He sat crouched up  
in a corner, his head upon his  
hand. I learned afterwards that  
he was in prison on account of a  
debt contracted for a friend, which  
he had no means of paying. Out-  
side the prison his wife and chil-  
dren were starving, and he could  
give them no help. The law,  
cruel and stupid, would keep him  
there until out of his destitution  
and wretchedness he should pay.  
So that he was doomed to a life-  
long imprisonment. But Will re-  
medied that later on. The most  
dare-devil fellows were a jolly band  
of three, waiting their trial on a  
charge of highway robbery, for  
which they were all hanged a few  
weeks afterwards, preserving to  
the last their jovial spirits, and  
exhibiting an example to all the  
world how brave men ought to  
face death.

My own party were not in the  
courtyard. Dan Gulliver and his  
sons were no common criminals.  
They had obtained, on payment  
of certain fees, the use of a ward  
all to themselves, where I found  
them. It was a large and cheerful  
room, but disfigured by the odious  
bars over the windows. Dan was  
pacing backwards and forwards;  
Job and Jephthah were sitting side  
by side in one corner, their hands  
folded, in silence and resignation;  
Will was at the table, writing.

"We must be very clear and  
precise about this statement, Dan,"  
he was saying. "There must be

to possible misunderstanding. They must be made to see that this is no cock-and-bull story, got up by us to help us out of our scrape."

Dan nodded reflectively.

"Now, this is what I have written—Pleasance, you are come to see us in our temporary home. Limited the accommodation, but we must make the best of it. Sit down, child, while we finish our business—now, Dan:

"This is the statement of me, Daniel Gulliver, of Rousdon Farm, parish of Rousdon, near the town of Lyme Regis.

"On Wednesday evening, October 21st, in this year 1803, I was on board my boat, the Dancing Polly, off the coast of France, homeward bound. I was running a cargo of brandy, in the landing of which I was caught and arrested by the revenue officers, and am now, with my two sons and a young man who was staying in my house, committed for trial for that offence.

"We took in our cargo at Barfleur, on Wednesday morning. We started, the wind being then light, but afterwards freshening, and S. E. by S.; a favourable wind for us, but bad for the ships we met later on in the Channel.

"Ten miles, or thereabouts, due north from Point Barfleur they were—three men-o'-war, eight frigates and small craft. They were beating up Channel, apparently

west by north, though the wind was dead against them, and they were flying French colours.

"On the Dancing Polly we were about half a mile to starboard of the enemy's fleet. One of the ships hailed us to haul down and lay to; but we held on, seeing the breeze was freshening, and all in our favour.

"At three o'clock or so we made Rousdon Bay, intending to send on news of the enemy's fleet as soon as we could. Unfortunately we were caught by the officers, and arrested. So I have lost no time in putting on paper the observations we made as to the whereabouts of the enemy.

"I am in the hope that this intelligence may prove of use to his majesty's government, and that the diligence I have used in forwarding it immediately may be taken into account against the fact of my having broken the law in my venture to the French coast."

"I don't think, Dan," said Will, after carefully reading the whole, "that we can do much more good to the document. There is the information, fresh and valuable and trustworthy. Nelson would like it, if the officials do not; but they would not dare to shelve it. And now, Dan, you must sign."

Dan Gulliver, after making the careful preparations for writing common to people of that time, unaccustomed to sign their names



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perpetrated a form which he meant  
to stand for Daniel Gulliver, while  
Job and Jephthah looked on in  
ilent admiration. Anything their  
father did was great and beautiful.  
For that parental respect I honour  
their memory.

That done, "Now, Pleasance,"  
said Will, who had taken the en-  
tire command of the business,  
please go into the town, ascertain  
who is the best lawyer in the town  
—the gentlefolks' lawyer. Go, call  
at his office, and bring him here  
without a moment's delay."

"Tell him not to fear about  
money, for there is plenty under  
the hearthstone," said Dan.

It was not difficult to find the  
best lawyer in Dorchester. Every-  
body sent me to Mr. Copas. I  
found him an elderly gentleman,  
who wore a large wig, and looked  
like a dignitary of the Church.

"This sort of case does not lie in  
the ordinary course of my prac-  
tice," he said; "I recommend you  
to go to Mr. Ferret, whose clients  
chiefly consist of——"

"I think, sir," I said, "that  
when you know who one of the  
smugglers is you will not refuse to  
act for us. Pray, pray come and  
see him! And, oh! if it is the  
money you are thinking of, Dan  
says, there is plenty of money under  
the hearthstone."

Mr. Copas smiled.

"It had better be in the bank,  
child. Well, I will go with you.  
But I do not promise anything."

We found Willalone in the ward,  
still busy with paper and pen. He  
was graver than usual, as was only  
natural, but when his eyes met  
mine he smiled in his quiet and  
sympathetic way.

"Now, my good fellow," said  
Mr. Copas, in a patronising and  
friendly tone, "tell me what you  
have to say, but do not waste time,  
and tell the truth."

"What I have to say is, Mr.  
Copas," said Will, "I am a gentle-  
man who has got into a scrape  
with three most worthy smug-  
glers."

"A gentleman? Well, you do  
not look much like a sailor. But  
go on."

"My name is Campion. I am the  
only son of the late Sir Godfrey  
Campion, and the chief partner in  
the firm of——"

"Good heavens! And you a  
smuggler?"

"Well, not exactly. But I went  
for a venture with Dan Gulliver,  
and we were all caught. That is  
the story."

"But you—you, my dear sir—  
the influence of your family must  
be brought to bear. Your case  
must be separated."

Here Will interposed.

"I cannot separate my case from  
the poor fellows with me," he said.  
"I cannot have any family inter-  
est employed, because, above all,  
my mother must not know of this  
—this disgrace. I shall stand my  
trial with the others. Fortunate-



ly"—he took up the papers which he had written and Dan had signed—"I have something here which ought to procure us an absolute pardon. It is secret intelligence for the Admiralty. We sighted the French fleet on our way back, and we can report on the enemy's course. Now, Mr. Copas, can you find me a trustworthy messenger? You can? Then let him ride as hard as horses can carry him. Let him ride without stopping, let him get to London before midnight. He must be armed with a letter from you and one from the mayor."

"I am the mayor."

"Good. The letter must simply give the date of our capture, and state that the document is signed by a man well-known in Lyme, perfectly trustworthy, although now in jail on a charge of smuggling."

Mr. Copas hastened away with the papers.

"They ought to let us go at once without a trial," said Will the sanguine. "Sit down and look cheerful, Pleasance dear. Why we can make love as well in a prison-ward as under Pinhay cliff. Let me kiss the tears from your pretty eyes, my peerless woodland nymph."

We had a fortnight to wait for the assizes. No answer came from the Admiralty, nor any sign that were all to be acquitted without a trial. Meantime Mr. Copas engaged the best counsel on the cir-

cuit, no less a man than the great Sergeant Jamblin, king's counsel for our defence. As for Joshua Meech, he did not once come to see us—an act of prudence which, while Dan commended it, was surprising to him. To be sure, as Dan said, it was only by chance that he wasn't caught with the rest. And when I told him of the single step I had heard before the revenue men came down the hill, he surmised that it was Joshua, and divined the secret of the empty hold. Who but Joshua could have cleared out the cargo in so expeditious and crafty a manner? Who but Joshua knew the *caches* in the cliff? Who but Joshua would have been so thoughtful of the interests of the firm?

The court, on the day of the trial, was crowded with spectators, principally people from Lyme and Bridport who knew Dan Gulliver. I listened with dismay to their talk, for it was nothing but speculation as to what the punishment would be.

Everything frightened me—the cold stiff court, with the constables and the javelin-men; the people in the galleries, who seemed eager for the show to begin—as if dear old Dan belonged to a caravan, and was to be brought out and tried for their gratification; the horrid dock; the witness-box, where I knew the evidence of our guilt would be overpowering; the barristers, who arrived just before

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ten in their wigs and gowns, and  
talked and laughed as if there was  
nothing to come of the day's work  
but a fight in words among them-  
selves; the empty seat of the  
judge; the clerk below with his  
papers.

I came with Mr. Copas, who  
provided me with a seat below  
the dock, so that I could shake  
hands with the prisoners.

Presently our man, our advo-  
cate, the great Sergeant Jamblin,  
K.C., afterwards Sir Peter Jamb-  
lin, one of his majesty's judges,  
came into court. He was followed  
by a clerk bearing a blue bag full  
of papers. I noticed that he nod-  
ded, but did not shake hands with  
Mr. Copas. Yet he shook hands  
with every member of the bar in  
the court. I believe that in those  
days it was not considered right  
for a barrister to shake hands with  
an attorney.

Presently he left the table and  
came to me.

"I have heard of you, Miss  
Noel," he said. "Pray let me shake  
hands with you. Mr. Copas has  
told me the whole history. I am  
only sorry that your gallant at-  
tempt to warn Dan Gulliver did  
not succeed. I am not sure, but I  
am in great hopes that we shall  
get them off altogether—one and  
all, you know; they were in the  
same boat. But if we cannot,  
then I may tell you that a little  
bird has whispered good news in  
my ear. A lord, high placed, has

interested himself in the case.  
Courage, my dear young lady."

This was very kind of the ser-  
jeant. He was not, to look at, a  
man from whom such kind things  
were to be expected; for he had a  
harsh and strident voice, full pro-  
jecting lips, and staring eyes. Also  
he had very red cheeks, and a way  
of pushing back his wig which  
showed that he was already quite  
bald. But when, years afterwards,  
I heard people talk of the harsh  
and overbearing way of Judge  
Jamblin, I remembered that he  
had once taken pity on a poor girl  
in grievous trouble, and said words  
of comfort to her.

Then there was a blare of trum-  
pets, and presently the whole court  
rose to greet the judge.

Now I firmly believe that, if we  
had had any other judge in all  
England to try the case, or if this  
particular judge had not been at-  
tacked the day before with gout  
in his great toe, so signal was the  
service rendered by Dan to the  
government, that we should have  
all got off with a free pardon. But  
the day was unlucky. Our judge,  
never the most kindly of men, was  
in a bad temper that morning.  
His face was pale, austere, and  
gloomy. His eyes had a fishy  
stare in them, which was due to  
his thinking more of his great toe  
than of the arguments going on  
before him. He was very old; he  
had been a judge many years; he  
had sentenced so many people to

death, to transportation, to imprisonment, that he had got to regard crime as a sort of disease, and himself as a doctor who administered a remedy or declared the case hopeless.

He seated himself, and the preliminaries began.

The jury were all Dorchester men, no man of Lyme would have brought a verdict against Dan. As for the prisoners, Dan came first. He leaned over the bars of the dock to kiss me when he took his place. Nobody could have looked more innocent than he, with his steadfast eyes, his grey locks, and his calm face. Job and Jephthah, who followed, stood staring straight before them, as if the court had nothing whatever to do with them, as if it were not there at all, in fact. Will came last. He passed his hand over the dock to press mine, and smiled in his old way; but he was flushed, and his lip trembled as he stood before them all, a gentleman in the guise of a common sailor, about to be tried for breaking the laws of his country.

Then the counsel for the prosecution rose and opened the case. He began by saying that the jury had before them a gang of notorious and hitherto unpunished smugglers, men who lived by defying the laws of the land. He congratulated the court on being able at last to bring these men to justice. He should prove—and here he set forth the whole facts, during which

Serjeant Jamblin leaned back and occasionally whispered one of the junior counsel, with a depreciatory smile.

When the counsel for the prosecution had finished he called his witnesses.

Lieutenant Pollard was the first. From information received he stationed himself, with a company of sixteen men, in Rousdon Bay at midnight on Thursday, October 25th. About four o'clock in the morning the Dancing Polly rounded the point and stood in for the creek. At the moment of landing he effected the arrest.

This was all, substantially, that he had to say. Then the serjeant rose and began to tear him to pieces.

"Where did you get your information, Lieutenant Pollard?"

"That, with his lordship's permission, I decline to state."

The court ruled that the question need not be asked.

"I was only anxious, my lord," said the serjeant, smiling sweetly, "for the witness's own sake, to prove that a British officer is incapable of employing any of those despicable persons who live by betraying the sins or follies of their fellow men."

Here the gallant officer reddened, and looked uncomfortable.

"We will go on," said the serjeant. "What did this villanous informer tell you?"

"That the notorious smuggler,

at Jamblin leaned back and finally whispered one of the counsel, with a depreciatory

the counsel for the prosecution had finished he called his

nant Pollard was the first information received he stated himself, with a company of men, in Rousdon Bay at on Thursday, October about four o'clock in the the Dancing Polly round- and stood in for the the moment of landing the arrest.

all, substantially, that ay. Then the serjeant began to tear him to

did you get your in- Lieutenant Pollard?" with his lordship's per- cline to state." ruled that the ques- be asked.

y anxious, my lord," ant, smiling sweetly, ness's own sake, to British officer is in- ploying any of those sons who live by sins or follies of en."

allant officer red- ed uncomfortable. on," said the ser- did this villanous u?"

torious smuggler,

Dan Gulliver would attempt a run over from the French coast on that particular night, laden with brandy.

"Ah! Remember, Lieutenant Pollard, you are on oath. Every word which you say is on oath. Pray, why 'notorious sm- gler?'"

The witness laughed. 'Everybody knows that he is a notorious smuggler.'

"I care nothing about everybody knowing; do you know?"

"Of course, I know."

"How do you know?"

"By general report."

"So, if general report proclaimed you a murderer, a thief, or anything else, you must of necessity be that kind of criminal?"

The witness was silent. Of course, he could not be expected to state that he had often partaken of the Gulliver brandy, and had, indeed, purchased it.

"Has the elder prisoner or any of the prisoners, indeed, ever been convicted of smuggling?"

"No."

"Have you ever seen them smuggling?"

"Never before."

"Do you, then, still persist in that expression, 'notorious smuggler?'"

The witness hesitated.

"I suppose I must withdraw it," he said.

"He withdraws it, gentlemen of the jury. Remark, if you

please, that the witness has never, he says, known of any smuggling on the part of the prisoners. Let the injurious presumption raised in your minds by my learned brother's opening speech, and perhaps confirmed by the careless, baseless expressions of a prejudiced witness, be immediately dismissed. We have to do with one charge, and one alone. Now, sir, your best attention, if you please. You say you caught this man smuggling, do you?"

"I do."

"What was he smuggling?"

"Brandy."

"How do you know?"

"One of my men opened a keg."

"And purloined, being in the revenue service, spirit which he supposed to be smuggled. Has that man been brought to justice?"

"He has not."

"Were there other kegs?"

"I did not see."

"When your men returned for their prize, what did they find?"

"Nothing. The craft had been cleared in their absence."

The next witness was the man, James Skirling by name, who had opened the keg.

He gave his evidence in as few words as possible, and was then in his turn submitted to cross-examination.

"I understand you," said the serjeant, in slow and awful tones,

"to inform the court that you took advantage of the darkness and confusion to broach a keg, and fill a bottle."

"I did."

"You stole that liquor, in fact; you placed it in this bottle?" He held up the fatal flask.

The man grinned.

"Don't laugh at me, sir; don't dare to laugh at the court. Many a poor fellow is lying in Newgate at this moment, and will be hanged by the neck, for no worse an offence. Worse? Far, far lighter. They stole, being common rogues. You betrayed a trust, being reputedly an honest officer. Far, far lighter. Tell the court again, sir, Did you, or did you not, steal the brandy?"

He stammered in confused accents that he did.

"You took the bottle with you, I suppose, on purpose to steal it if you got the chance?"

"I did."

"There is a pretty rogue for you!" cried the serjeant, throwing himself back and sticking his thumbs into his waistcoat pockets.

"Here is a villain in grain! He deliberately plans a robbery, deliberately executes it, and in open court boasts of it. My lord, I must ask for the prosecution of this rogue. In the interests of the country such a rogue must be hanged. His punishment would be beneficial to the public morals. I am not sure that I ought not to

ask for the prosecution of his superior officer—if not as *particeps criminis*, then as conniving at and stifling the crime."

He turned again to the terrified witness, whose legs trembled beneath him, while his cheek was of a ghastly pallor.

"You took one keg and you opened it; you found brandy in it; you stole some of that brandy. Pray, were there other kegs?"

"There were; I saw them by the light of my dark lantern."

"Good. Did you open those kegs?"

"No."

"Were those kegs ever examined?"

"No; they were all cleared out while we were marching the prisoners away."

"You have no knowledge what they contained?"

"Brandy, of course," said the man, picking up his courage a little.

"You will swear, without knowing the facts, that they contained brandy?"

"How could——?"

"Answer my question. Can you swear that they contained brandy?"

"No."

"They may have contained butter. We all know the excellence of French butter. Will you swear that they did not contain butter?"

"No."

One or two other witnesses were examined, who all swore to the



the prosecution of his same facts. One thing was clear, officer—if not as *particeps* that had it not been for that unlucky little bottle of brandy, the prosecution would have broken down completely.

Three witnesses for character were called.

The principal evidence was the Rev. Benjamin Burden, rector of Rousdon. The poor old rector, a veritable peasant-priest, stood in the witness-box clad in his tattered cassock and his battered old wig, yet bearing upon him the dignity of his sacred calling. The serjeant handled him with much softness and delicacy. He made him inform the court that he was the rector of Rousdon, that its population was fourteen, his stipend was thirty-eight pounds, and his church was a barn. This melancholy condition of things moved the jury in his favour, and dissipated the bad effect which might otherwise have been produced upon a fat and well-fed jury, clad in strong broadcloth, by his rags and his evident poverty.

The counsel went on to elicit from the rector that Dan Gulliver was his churchwarden, and that with his two sons he kept the church in such repair as made divine service possible. The clergyman added, quite simply and with dignity, that Dan Gulliver was a worthy and religious man, who lived the life of a true Christian.

The serjeant emphasized these replies, one after the other, each with a waive of his hand towards

the jury, as much as to say: "You hear this, gentlemen; you will remember the evidence of this holy minister of religion."

The evidence of the good old man, however, lost its whole weight when the counsel for the prosecution asked him one or two questions in a different direction.

He said:

"I fear, Mr. Burden, that the lamentable exiguity of your income must shut you out from the enjoyment of many of our choicest blessings—port-wine for instance!"

The rector shook his head sadly.

"I believe that I remember the taste of port," he said, "but I cannot be sure—it is so long since I saw any."

"Brandy cannot altogether replace port, can it?" asked the barrister.

"It cannot," said the rector.

"Yet I daresay you get brandy, at least sometimes?"

"I do," said the rector.

"As a present, now? from a parishioner?"

"I have it given to me," said the rector, "by my churchwarden, Dan Gulliver."

"I will not ask you," said the counsel, "whence you imagine this brandy to be derived. I prefer to think that you ask no questions, and have no suspicions. It would be too much to believe that a divine of your age and position should countenance the practice of smuggling."



Then followed other witnesses, and more fencing.

Presently the counsel for the Crown made his speech. It was very short. "Here," he said, "was a man, with his two sons, and a stranger, probably a hired hand. The man was well-known to be a smuggler—so well known that he was afraid Lyme Regis was to a man in alliance with him to defeat the ends of justice, and shielded him steadily in his runs to and from the coast of France. He was caught, so to speak, red-handed.

It was impossible to resist the conviction, that the rest of the kegs which composed the cargo contained, like the one which had been opened, brandy. Of course it was open to any one to maintain the improbable. His learned brother might ask them to believe that these four men had crossed the Channel, and landed on an enemy's coast, in quest of potatoes, cabbages, fruit, butter, or any other marketable article. The undisputed facts were, that here was a man with a fast-sailing craft and a fishing-boat—what was the object of the former? That his most intimate friends admitted that they received brandy as a present from him. Where did he procure that brandy? That he was notoriously a smuggler by profession. As regarded the evidence of the man Skirling, the actual fact could not be disputed, although the act itself showed a low tone

of morality, which all would regret to find existing in so respectable a body as the revenue service. Doubt the gallant officer who had effected the arrest with so much promptitude and courage, although with a little indiscretion, would take cognizance of the offence in his military capacity. Finally he asked the jury to give a verdict for the prosecution, and so to strike terror into the hearts of other evil-doers and defiers of the law.

When our counsel's turn came, he made a most eloquent and indignant speech. According to him, Dan Gulliver, the much maligned, was an admirable specimen of a class which formed, he said, the backbone of our country; he was a yeoman, farming the few acres which formed his paternal estate, and living frugally with his sons and an adopted daughter, in a cottage upon his own land. For fishing purposes he had two boats, one of them, called the Dancing Polly, being a remarkably fast sailer. On this particular night he had been along the coast picking up, no doubt, a cargo of butter and eggs, or it might be fish, and such harmless matters, and proposing to return to Rousdon Bay, a little creek or inlet of the sea immediately below his farm.

Here he protested against the assumption that the expedition had been across the Channel. "How can you prove it? How came the suspicion to arise! Was it likely

ality, which all would regret existing in so respectable as the revenue service. No gallant officer who had the arrest with so much attitude and courage, although a little indiscretion, would minimize of the offence in military capacity. Finally the jury to give a verdict of prosecution, and so to strike to the hearts of other and defiers of the law. Our counsel's turn came. A most eloquent and impressive speech. According to him, ever, the much maligned, admirable specimen of a formed, he said, the of our country; he was harming the few acres of his paternal estate, struggling with his sons and daughter, in a cottage on his own land. For fish he had two boats, one of the Dancing Polly, a remarkably fast sailer. On the night he had been lost picking up, no of butter and eggs, fish, and such harmless proposing to return to Bay, a little creek in the sea immediately

rested against the expedition had Channel. "How? How came the! Was it likely

that in so small a vessel, at that stormy period of the year, four men would venture on a voyage so dangerous? What is more common than a trading voyage along the coast? What more reasonable to suppose than that a small farmer with a taste for sailing and boating should carry on such a trade? At least, gentlemen, till the contrary is proved, you have no right to suppose that the object of keeping the Dancing Polly was a criminal one."

Daniel Gulliver, he went on to say, was accompanied by the two boys and a stranger. No secrecy was observed about the expedition, and some idle or malignant person, one of those creeping things which infest every society of men, thought it worth while to communicate the proposed voyage to Lieutenant Polard, that gallant officer whose discretion was not equal to his zeal, and whose eagerness to protect His Majesty's revenue led him to overlook the fact. "You must not arrest a man on suspicion and charge him with smuggling, unless you can prove it. "For, gentlemen," he said, "what actual proof have we? This"—he held up the half-empty pint-bottle of brandy—"this is the mighty proof. A small half-pint of spirits, which smells to me, gentlemen"—he took out the cork and smelt it cautiously—"which smells to me, I confess, of rum, rather than of brandy—is all the proof, absolutely the only proof

that we have. In the dead of a dark night, a man whose object is theft, hurriedly steals this spirit from the hold of the vessel, and swears that he saw other kegs, the contents of which are unknown. The place is most retired and secluded. They carry off their prisoners, the officer never once thinking of examining the boat. When they send back for that purpose there is nothing at all in the boat. Mind, gentlemen, no one had been there. Yet the boat was in ballast. That is a very remarkable circumstance. That is a very suspicious circumstance. That is a circumstance which in my mind renders entirely valueless the evidence of the man—the chief witness—whose only value was that it seemed to afford a basis for assumption of guilt. Remember, gentlemen, again, that the only proof of guilt is a half-pint of rum, or some such spirit, in a bottle—a half-pint—about enough to amuse a gentleman between a bottle of port and bedtime; and on that half-pint you are asked to convict this honest, religious, and God-fearing yeoman, with his two innocent boys, and a young man of whom no harm whatever is known, and therefore none should be suspected."

When all was done the judge summed up. It was most unfortunate for us that his gout rendered him ill-tempered and sour. He went through the evidence bit by bit, pointed out how simple it was, how

clearly an act of smuggling was proved, and showed them that they ought to consider not the amount smuggled but the intention. As for the prisoners, the judge said he had no doubt about their being all habitual criminals. As for the rest of the cargo, the judge said he had no doubt whatever that it was entirely composed of French brandy.

The jury were dismissed; they were away for five minutes only; they came back with a unanimous verdict—

"Guilty, but recommended to mercy on the ground of the elder prisoner's otherwise good character and the youth of the others."

"Prisoners at the bar," said the judge, "you have heard the verdict of the jury. With that verdict I entirely agree. Have you anything further to say?"

Dan cleared his throat and spoke.

"Only that your lordship was quite right," he said. "There was brandy in them kegs. That is all."

There was a general laugh, and even the judge smiled austere.

"I am glad that you admit your guilt. You are recommended to mercy. Under other circumstances, I should have inflicted the full penalty of seven years' penal servitude. But I am instructed from another and a higher quarter that you, Daniel Gulliver, have conferred a service which may be of importance to the country. In return

for this you and your party will experience the king's clemency. I am also anxious to take into account the good character which you have received from your rec-tor and others. If I could believe that this run of yours was a solitary venture, I would have inflicted a nominal sentence upon you. But it was not. You know that you have been systematically engaged in breaking the law. You have brought up your sons in your own footsteps. The laws of England must not be broken with impunity. The sentence of the court therefore is, that you and your two sons and the fourth prisoner, William Campion, do serve His Majesty on board the royal fleet for the space of three years. During that time you will not be debarred from receiving such pay, rewards, prize-money, and promotions as may be considered your just due. The Dancing Polly is, of course, the prize of Captain Pollard."

Dan looked at Will, not at his two sons, as if to see what he thought of it. Will put up his finger as if enjoining silence.

"We thank your lordship," Dan said. "God save the king!"

He stooped over the dock to kiss me.

"Remember the hearthstone, my pretty," he whispered, "and keep up your heart, and wait for us in patience. We shall come home again. The Lord bless thee!"

you and your party with  
the king's clemency.

anxious to take into ac-  
count the good character which  
I received from your rec-  
ommendations. If I could believe  
that one of yours was a soli-  
dity, I would have inflicted

a capital sentence upon you,  
but not. You know that  
I have been systematically en-  
deavouring to break the law. You

put up your sons in your  
prisons. The laws of Eng-  
land are not to be broken with im-  
punity. The sentence of the court

is that you and your  
son, the fourth prisoner,  
shall be hanged. Do serve His

Majesty the royal fleet  
for three years. Dur-  
ing that time you will not be de-  
ceiving such pay,

money, and promo-  
tion. Do consider your  
son. Dancing Polly is  
prize of Captain

Will, not at his  
elbow to see what he  
will put up with his  
silence.

Your lordship," Dan  
said to the king!"  
and the dock to kiss

the hearthstone, my  
dear, "and keep  
waiting for us in  
all come home  
less than I!"

But it was Will who held me  
fastest.

"Be patient, dear," he whispered,  
"be patient and true. Good-bye."

Then they removed the prison-  
ers, and Mr. Copas took me out of  
the court.

Next day he sent me in a car-  
riage back to Lyme.

It was in the evening that I ar-  
rived. Joshua Meech was in the  
street. He was dressed in black,  
and had evidently just come out  
of his meeting-house, so that he  
was playing his third part.

"Dispensations!" he groaned,  
holding up both his hands. "Oh  
Pleasance, let us kiss the rod.  
Three years aboard the royal fleet!  
What a sentence for a young gen-  
tleman! Ropes-ends and cat-o'-  
nine-tails, with salt junk. 'Tis the  
chastisement of Providence."

"Do not come near me, Joshua,"  
I said fiercely, thinking of his last  
visit to me. "For three years I  
shall see no one."

"Grievous, grievous dispensa-  
tions!" he replied, holding up both  
hands and shaking his head. But  
there was the joy of revenge in his  
eyes. He was glad that my Will  
was out of the way for three years.

## CHAPTER V.

### FEMINA FURENS.



FOR two days I sat at  
home, or walked about  
the Holmbush Fields;  
brooding. The Danc-  
ing Polly was gone, she was the  
prize of the revenue people. They  
had not taken my little boat;  
I might, as of old, put out to sea  
and dream, no longer of the future,  
but of the golden past, on the gen-  
tle bosom of the Channel. And of  
course, there was the Chace Mary,  
which was no good to me. For  
two days I thought of nothing but  
the sentence. Three years at sea;  
three years on board a man-o'-war;  
three years among the rough sea-  
dogs who manned our ships; three  
years in a hard and severe service;  
where they flogged the men for  
next to nothing; where the pur-  
sers cheated and starved the crew;  
where the food was the coarsest;  
where the rivalry after every ac-  
tion was, who could show the big-  
gest "butcher's bill;" where there  
was but one saving clause—that  
the men fought to win. I knew,  
from the talk I had heard, what  
manner of thing this service was;  
I knew how hard and rough it  
was; I feared nothing for Dan and  
the two boys, for obvious reasons,  
but Will was a gentleman.

And then, he might get killed  
in an engagement. Fights were

always happening; there was no day but some new despatch was published, showing how his majesty's ship *Hero* had fought the French ship *Gasconade*, and brought her home in tow, disabled, and a prisoner. Yet the French went on building ships for us to take them. That is to me the most wonderful part of the whole history; that the French went on fighting a hopeless game, and turned out fleet after fleet, of ships better built than our own—although Dan used to say, too heavily laden with upper gear—for us to take and destroy.

In one of these engagements, my Will, Dan, the boys, might meet their end.

Well, there was hardly a woman in England at that time who was not placed like myself; hardly one who had not son, brother, husband, or lover, fighting somewhere his majesty's battles, afloat or ashore. A cruel and anxious time; a time when poor, ignorant girls like myself went about with tightened lips, hard eyes, and clenched hands, trying vainly to be hopeful; when cultivated ladies hid their pain and smiled with agony at their hearts; when all of us, ignorant and cultivated alike, found at last our only hope and refuge—upon our knees. Oh the yearning prayers, the tearful supplications to the throne of mercy, the torture of mind, which led at last to a trust in the divine protector—when all the time, per-

haps, the brave young fellow for whom our tears were shed and our prayers were offered, was lying fathoms deep on the shells of ocean, or covered somewhere in a foreign land with a few inches of earth, his campaigns over for ever!

Forty-eight hours' struggle through the depths of despair brought me to the goal of resignation which all women, after such mental conflicts, reach. Then I began to look about for some way of passing the time.

Isaac Agus and his wife would carry on the farm; the produce of the farm—it was not much—would suffice to keep him, his wife, and myself. That I soon argued out, and represented to the old labourer, who was hard of comprehension, but managed to understand at length that he was to be sole responsible manager for three years.

This settled, I began to think about the very remarkable and rapid clearance of the cargo.

Of course, it must have been Joshua whose step I heard in the bay; it must have been Joshua come down to lend a hand; it must have been Joshua who cleared the hold; no one else could have done it.

Where had he put the cargo?

The arrest took place at four in the morning; when the revenue men came back to look after their prize it was past eight. Four hours to move fifty or sixty kegs



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 eight. Four  
 or sixty kegs

of brandy, each holding four gal-  
 ons or so.

For one man, single-handed,  
 that is a heavy job. It would not  
 be possible to carry the kegs very  
 far.

Now, we had half-a-dozen places,  
 known only to ourselves, in which  
 we could stow our merchandise.  
 They were scattered about in the  
 Undercliff. Some were a good  
 mile from the bay, one or two  
 were quite close. Joshua, I thought  
 would take the nearest of all.  
 This was a place lying quite close  
 to the path from the bay to  
 the farm; to reach it you scram-  
 bled over a sloping ledge of  
 loose stones, and you passed  
 by what seemed to be a tan-  
 gled heap of brambles. If you  
 got to the back of the bushes you  
 saw that they covered only a  
 natural hollow, a sort of punch-  
 bowl, which made the most ad-  
 mirable cellar in the world,  
 especially in summer, when the  
 leaves were thick.

I went straight to the spot, and  
 pulled aside the branches. Below  
 me to my great joy, I discovered  
 the whole of the Dancing Polly's  
 last run.

Joshua had put it there—care-  
 ful Joshua! He had not ventured  
 yet to sell any of it—prudent  
 Joshua! No doubt he would ac-  
 count to Dan on his return for his  
 share of the money—righteous  
 Joshua!

Anyhow, whether Joshua did

this thing with a view to his own  
 interest only, or not, it was plucki-  
 ly done, and well done.

Woman like, I had found a se-  
 cret, and I rejoiced. Who could  
 have laid the information?  
 No one but ourselves—of whom  
 Joshua was one—knew. Now,  
 much as I dreaded the man for his  
 violence and masterfulness, I  
 never for one moment suspected  
 Joshua of this villany. The  
 loathing, the hatred, the contempt  
 with which men of all classes in  
 those days regarded an informer,  
 were such, that a mother would  
 have preferred to see her son ly-  
 ing in his grave than to hear  
 that he had become such a crea-  
 ture.

I have heard that a poet has  
 said that an angry woman will  
 dare anything. I think I have  
 learned from my own experience  
 that a man from whom has been  
 taken the girl he loves, will do  
 and dare anything to win her  
 back.

The day after I made this  
 covery, there came to Rousdon  
 Bay the young fellow belonging  
 to Captain Pollard's company, of  
 whom I have already spoken,  
 John Beer.

He was a good-natured lad, and  
 had never ceased to regret the  
 part he played in the case. He  
 found me sitting in the porch  
 looking sadly out to sea, and he  
 sat down, kindly saying nothing  
 for awhile. That was good of him.



"What is it you want with me, John Beer?"

"Nothing," he said.

Then there was no need for me to say anything, so I went on with my meditations, which were gloomy enough.

"The captain did say," he presently went on, "he did say that I might come over here, and find out something about the cargo, if I could; and he did say, too, that he hoped you wouldn't fret and grizzle, because, there's more comes back than you'd think, and it is only for three years. Lord! what's three years to a chap? Next door to nothing—and good fun all the time knocking over they Frenchmen like ninepins."

I made no reply.

"About the cargo, Pleasance. It's a sad loss to us is that brandy."

"Yes," I said; "I am very glad you haven't got it."

"Of course you know where it is," he went on, with a meaning smile. "Everybody knows that you were in all the secrets. The captain he says that if you weren't the prettiest girl in all Dorsetshire he'd have put you in the dock, alongside of the rest."

"If I did know where it is," I said, "I should not tell you. Look for it and find it, if you can."

"Who could have taken it? There was only one man who knew about the run—him as gave the information; because I heard him tell the captain so. But even he

would not have dared, after giving that information."

"Who was it gave the information?" I sprang to my feet all trembling with excitement. "Who was it told you?"

"That," said the man, "is a secret."

"Tell me, John Beer, tell me. Oh, if I only knew!"

"I wonder what you would give to know, Pleasance?"

"How can I tell?"

"It was a mean and sneaking thing to do," said the man. "I heard it accidentally. I was sentry on duty. The captain's window was open and I listened. The captain and him, they think no one knows. I was in the front of the house, where the flagstaff is; he came in from the back, so as no one should see. But the window was open, and I both heard and seen him."

"Tell me, John Beer, tell me! Oh, what can I give to make you tell me?"

He reflected with a straw in his mouth.

"There was fifty kegs, if there was one," he murmured. "Take away the captain's share, it is a matter of three guineas ahead. If I had a couple of them kegs—"

"You shall, John, you shall; I'll give them to you at once."

"And yet it's a risk. Suppose the captain was to find out."

"How can he find out?"

"Why, girls talk wild. You'd

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have dared, after giving information."

As it gave the information, I sprang to my feet all with excitement. "Who are you?"

And the man, "is a sentry."

John Beer, tell me, how did you know?"

What would you give for the pleasure?"

I tell?"

mean and sneaking."

said the man. "I am a sentry."

entally. I was sentry at the captain's window."

I listened. The captain said they think no one

in the front of the flagstaff is; he

back, so as no one at the window was

heard and seen."

John Beer, tell me!

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find out."

d out?"

x wild. You'd

be in a fair—able rage, you would, please, if you only knew. It's the meanest, sneakingest thing ever done. That's what it is."

"If you will only tell me, I will never let out to a single creature how I got to know. Tell me!"

"Why then, if it's all right about them two kegs, and you won't never let out who told you—and considering what a mean and sneaking thing it was to do—why, I don't mind telling you. It was no other—than—Joshua—Meech himself!"

I stared at him, incredulous. The thing was impossible.

"I tell you," repeated John Beer, "I seen him. It was the evening before, and at nine o'clock."

Nine o'clock! Then he must have gone straight away to give the information, after telling me that, whatever happened, I was to blame.

"The window was open. The captain was reading by the light of a pair of candles. I heard steps at the back of the house, crunching the gravel. Then I heard a knock at the captain's door. I looked in at the window, being so placed in the dark that I could do that without being seen. And I saw Joshua Meech himself open the door and walk in. Then I knew that there was mischief brewing."

"Pleasance!" he went on after a pause, during which he gasped with indignation. "I knew that there was villany. And I wish I'd

have put my carbine at that open window and let him have the charge in his face, the scoundrel."

"Captain Pollard," he says, looking more like a devil than a human man, let alone Dan Gulliver's nephew, 'I've come to lay information.'

"Why!" cries the captain, 'Information from you, Joshua Meech? Dick Turpin will be laying information next. Or perhaps Dan Gulliver.'

"I've come to lay information, sir, against Dan Gulliver."

"You? Against Dan Gulliver? What is the meaning of this? Why, man, you are his partner! You are his nephew!"

"I've come to lay information against Dan Gulliver," repeated Joshua, with a white face. I was listening all the while, you may be sure.

"What does it mean? Have you quarrelled?"

"That does not matter to you," he replied, doggedly. 'I'm come with that information. Will you take it, or will you refuse it? If you do, I must go to the Mayor and lay it before him.'

"Joshua Meech," said the Captain, 'you are a villain. You are a black, foul villain. Whether this is treachery or revenge, you are a double-distilled scoundrel.'

"Joshua Meech made no reply."

"I must take your information," the captain went on. 'It is my duty to take it and act upon it.'

Most informers are poor starving devils, whose necessities make them enact the part of spy. You have not that excuse. You are bringing ruin upon your uncle, the man by whom you have been befriended and enriched. It is revenge, I suppose, for some petty quarrel, but such devilish revenge I never heard of before. Go on with your tale, blackguard and villain !

" Ah, Pleasance, you all thought, at the trial, that the captain gloried in what he had done. Don't you believe that no more. Only he had to do it, you know. It was his duty.

" Then Joshua Meech told how the run over was to be that very night, how the Dancing Polly was already gone, and how she would return the next night.

" The captain took it all down.

" ' Is that all ? ' he asked.

" ' That is all,' said Joshua.

" Then go. Do not breathe the air of this room with me. Great heavens ! ' he cried, starting to his feet, ' that such a villain should live in this kingdom of England, and call himself my fellow countryman ! Go ! '

" There, Pleasance ; now you know all."

Yes, this was his revenge. This was his plan to prevent me from marrying Will. To make this impossible, or to defer it, he had the incredible baseness to sacrifice his uncle and his cousins. Was it possible, could any one have be-

lieved that a man should be so wicked ?

I sat all that day meditating revenge, thinking in what way I could most injure this man. One wild plan after another suggested itself to me. I would set fire to his mill. I would secretly destroy the trees in his orchard. I would put a stone in the wheels of his mill. I would go into the town and tell everybody.

Nothing, however, satisfied me. Revenge never does satisfy. If his mill was burned he would build it up again ; but that would not give me back Dan, and the boys and Will, and the Dancing Polly. He could repair any mischief I could do him. Even if I whispered it round in Lyme Regis that he was the informer, he would deny it, and I had no proof, because John Beer was bound to silence. What then could I do ?

In the evening, still brooding over the revenge I was to take, I grew restless and walked over the fields to the mill itself.

It was a bright night ; the valleys which stretch away behind Lyme lay all bathed in a beautiful moonlight, everything was peaceful and quiet, except the heart of the girl who went along the lonely way. She met no one, she saw nothing, her soul was full of an inextinguishable craving for vengeance ; she was like a tigress bereft of her cubs.

The mill stood alone in its field,

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silent, and backed by the black  
depths of its shadows and the  
woods. The top of the big wheel  
could be made out standing clear  
against the sky. Beneath it poured  
the waters of the leat, which in the  
daytime worked the wheel.

I stole like a shadow through  
the orchard; on the other side,  
away from the mill, was a linney,  
or penthouse, where Joshua's wag-  
gon was kept. I sat down on the  
broad wheel of the waggon, trying  
to put my disordered thoughts into  
some sort of shape. I hungered  
for revenge—I longed to make him  
suffer. I had come here to feel  
near to the man on whom I was  
going to work revenge.

He was on the other side of the  
wall, I thought. He was chuck-  
ling, no doubt, over the end of my  
love-story, laughing to think that  
my lover was serving before the  
mast on one of His Majesty's ships  
for three long years. O villain!

It was something to be near him,  
to feel that one could even kill  
him if one had the strength—that  
alone was wanting—to think that  
close to him one could execute  
whatever the mind could conceive.

Presently, as I listened, I heard  
voices. Some one was with him  
then. I crept from the penthouse  
and stepped lightly over the nar-  
row flowerbed which stood beneath  
the window. The shutter was  
closed, but one knew what sort  
of a shutter would be that of Josh-  
ua's cottage at the mill. In fact

it was not even barred, and there  
was a hole in it, through which I  
saw what was going on. The visi-  
tor was our old friend Mr. Mal-  
lock, justice of the peace, and he  
was talking in his magisterial  
way.

"Quite a providence, Joshua"—  
he wagged his head till his purple  
cheeks shook and wobbled—"that  
you were able to rescue the cargo.  
Quite a providence. At one time  
I thought I should be able to dis-  
miss the charge, but it was impos-  
sible. Poor old Dan! Poor boys!  
Who was the villain that in-  
formed?"

"I wish we knew, sir."

"I wish we did, with all my  
heart. He would get a warm re-  
ception at Lyme, I promise him so  
much. However—three years—it  
is a long time. You may send me,  
Joshua, at the old price—ah!—  
twenty kegs—yes, I think I had  
better secure what I can get.  
Twenty kegs. Dear me! They  
can come to-morrow morning in  
flour sacks. I will pay for them  
now."

There was a great counting out  
of money on the table. When  
Joshua was satisfied that it was  
all right, he put it up in a little  
bag, and promised to bring the  
brandy next morning.

Then the worthy justice of the  
peace retired. I slipped back to  
my place of concealment, while  
Joshua accompanied his visitor to  
the door with many expressions of

gratitude for his custom and his condolences.

"You are very welcome, Joshua, very welcome," said his worship; "and as for that villain——"

He disappeared in the darkness, still muttering what he would do, had he the power, to the scoundrel who spoiled an honest man's trade.

Joshua went back, and I heard him bar the door, so that I knew he would have no other visitors.

Then I returned to my place and watched him again through the hole of the shutter.

He was rather pale, and his hand was shaking. No doubt he was thinking of his villainy.

He went to the cupboard in the wall, and drew out a bottle, containing, I knew well, some of poor Dan Gulliver's best. I wished I could dash the bottle in his face as he drank from a wineglass.

The brandy gave him courage, I suppose, for he looked round him with a more assured air. What he was saying to himself, I believe, was that nobody knew, except Captain Pollard, and he certainly could not tell. Nobody knew! Why, within a short six feet of where he stood was the girl he had so foully wronged, burning to be avenged.

He tied the bag of money which Mr. Mallock had left with him, tightly, and taking a short thick poker which stood beside the andirons, he prised up the hearthstone. There he deposited the bag,

and replaced the stone carefully, taking the precaution to sweep ashes over the edges, so as to conceal the fact of its recent removal. We all used the hearthstone for our bank, and we all went through the same formality of trying to hide the fact.

This done, he looked around him again, sighed—with another thought of his villainy, I suppose—and seized the stone bottle which held the brandy. One, two, three glasses in succession of raw spirit. Was this his nightly custom, or was he seeking to drown remorse? Then he took the candle, opened the door which stood at the bottom of the stairs, and stumbled up to his bedroom. It seemed to me that Joshua was likely to sleep heavily, after all that brandy.

I waited below, motionless, until the light was extinguished. Then I began cautiously to see if I could open the window. The shutter was not secured, as I said before. The window was upon hinges, and opened inwards. It was a heavy window, consisting of small square panes of thick glass, set in lead. I lifted the latch which fastened it, by means of a small twig. The window fell open, I waited for a moment to see if Joshua was round, and then I climbed into the room.

What I was going to do was simply to rob Joshua. That was part of my revenge. Not to get any advantage out of the money

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for myself at all, but just to deprive him of it.

It was nothing to me being without a light in the room. I knew exactly where everything was. I first bolted the door of the staircase. That would secure me plenty of time for escape, should Joshua be roused. Then I took the poker and prised up the hearthstone cautiously. Feeling in the dark, I discovered one, two, three—eight bags, all tied up, and all containing money. Now I was quite certain when I laid my hands upon those bags, that I was not only going to take some of Joshua's money, but all of it. He kept his whole store, all his savings in that hiding-place. I ought, at this length of time, to feel ashamed at the baseness of my revenge; but I cannot. I suppose I ought to repent of what I did—but I cannot. The wrong was so bitter, the villainy was so unutterable, that I have only to think of my own feelings that night, and I justify myself at once. It was delightful to me to feel that I was taking the whole of his money. I hoped that its loss would ruin him. When the bags were all out, I carefully put back the hearthstone.

Eight bags. There were no more. I laid them all together on the table, felt in the drawer for the ball of string which the practical mind of Joshua made him always keep there, and tied them all together, and attached about

three yards of string by which to hang them in their place.

There must have been a good sum of money in the whole, because the bags were pretty heavy to carry. I dropped them cautiously out of the window, crept outside myself and carried away the bags.

The great undershot wheel of the mill occupied, as we know already, one end of the building which formed both mill and cottage. It stood there, under a broad sloping penthouse of heavy thatch, which made it dark on the brightest day. Once, long before, when the wheel was stopped for some repairs, I held it in its place by a wooden spoke, and amused myself by climbing to the top under this projecting roof. It was a girl's trick and rather a dangerous one. I got no good, not even the nest which I expected to find; but I saw, hidden away in the darkness, a great hook, stuck in the wall. What it was originally placed there for I do not know, but it was so high up, so hidden by the wheel and the black shadows of the roof, that it was quite invisible from below. That was the place for my bags. First, I succeeded, by tying a spoke of the wheel to one of the beams in the woodwork, in keeping the wheel, over which the water was no longer running, motionless, while I climbed up. Then I mounted the wheel, which



was now like a ladder, and clambered up three or four of the undershot buckets, till I could reach the wall close under the roof. Here I felt about in the darkness till I found the hook, and then, tying the end of the string securely to it, I lowered the bags slowly into the black water beneath. I heard above the noise of the falling water the splash of the bags, I felt them touch the bottom, and then with a great gladness in my heart, thinking of Joshua's rage when he should find out his loss, I cautiously descended from the perilous perch, untied the spoke, and considered what to do next.

The first temptation—a childish one—was to hurl stones at his bedroom window, so as to awaken him and bring him down; but I abandoned that idea, as another and a more brilliant one occurred to me.

Joshua had sold twenty kegs out of the cargo to Mr. Mallock, the justice of the peace. No doubt he had arranged, or was arranging for the sale of all the rest. No doubt, too, he intended adding the proceeds of this transaction to the pile—aha! the pile beneath the hearthstone.

I set off to run almost the whole of the way back to Rousdon, under the impulse of this new idea which filled my mind. It was about eleven o'clock as I should judge. It took me nearly an hour before I got to Rousdon

Farm. I had business to do, and there would be no thought of bed for me that night. But first I went into the house, found some supper, and procured certain handy tools necessary for my purpose.

Had I time to do it? It had taken nearly four hours to remove the cargo of the Dancing Polly from the boat to the hiding-place. Could I do what I proposed in six?

I would try.

There certainly was no stronger girl than myself along the whole shore. The life I had led in the open air; the rowing, sailing and fishing; the gardening, the rambles and climbs among the crags of the Holmbush Fields and Pinhay Point; the sea-bathing, the generous but simple diet; all these, added to a physique to which Dame Nature had been generous, made me active and muscular above the average even of young women living like myself. Yet it was a heavy task which I proposed to effect.

It was nothing less than to carry every single keg down to the seashore, turn out the contents, fill them with sea-water, and carry them back again. Fifty kegs at least. Two hundred journeys up and down that steep cliff, each time with a weighty burden. But the thought of Joshua's consternation when he should discover it gave me courage.

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When I had got all but six or seven down the cliff another thought struck me. There were two kegs for my informant, John Beer. It would not be fair to give him sea-water after the service he had done me. There was also the poor old rector. What would he do without his brandy? And, unless I provided for him, he would get none till Dan and the boys came home again. So I removed the last six, and carried them away to a place where I was pretty certain Joshua would not think of looking for them. And then I proceeded to the next part of my task.

The kegs were now all in a row upon the beach, lying on their sides. I went from one to the other, and with my hammer and chisel forced out the bung from every one. In a few minutes the smooth water of the little bay was salt-water brandy-grog, rather weak, and the kegs were empty.

To fill them again quickly was more difficult. I had to take off shoes and stockings, tuck up skirts, and wade in the water, carrying each keg separately. It was now growing late. I must have been at work five hours, and yet the kegs had all to be carried back.

Well, it was done at length. The day was breaking as the last keg was laid in its place, and the brambles pulled together to hide them. The tide had come up in

the bay, and washed away all traces of the brandy which had been spilt so freely on the stones. I sat down, and tried to think soberly what I had done.

A villain was punished; the meanest, most treacherous, most cold-blooded scoundrelism ever perpetrated had received some sort of fit reward. In a few days, perhaps in a few hours, the traitor would find his hearthstone prised up, and his treasure gone. A few hours more and he would discover that his prize from Dan's unlucky run was not worth the kegs which contained it.

And yet I was unsatisfied. All this would not give me back my lover, nor bring home Dan and the boys, nor undo the misery of the past three weeks. I thirsted for more revenge.

When I rose to go home the splendid sun was rising over the waters of the Channel, and the morning was clear and bright. Far off on the horizon I saw the sails of a great fleet. It must be Nelson's fleet. Among the ships, somewhere, were those I loved, going away to sea, to face battle, sudden death, shipwreck, plague, and pestilence, all by the act of one man.

I lay at home all that morning asleep. At twelve o'clock Mrs. Agus, surprised at my long sleep, awakened me, and brought me some dinner.

Then I began to think again.

In the afternoon arrived my exciseman

"Have you done anything to Joshua Meech, Pleasance?" he asked, in a breathless way, so that I knew he must have heard something.

"Done anything?"

"Ay. Joshua's been robbed. He's been robbed of all his money. He's been tearing round town all day. Ho! ho! I hope the information money was with it too. Who could have robbed him?"

"Who could?" I echoed.

"It must have been someone who had a spite against him. Who but you had a spite? Oh Pleasance, Pleasance! it's a hanging matter."

"Don't talk wild," I replied.

"If Joshua is robbed so much the better. I am glad of it."

John Beer shook his head. He was only half satisfied.

"To be sure," he said, "I've seen gipsies about. You know best. Well, and how about the kegs, Pleasance?"

"I will give you the kegs at once, if you will do me another favour. Nay, it is not to tell me more about Joshua; I know quite enough. It is only to carry some brandy to Parson Burden's."

"Why, I'll do that," he said briskly, "and more, for your sake."

He took the wheelbarrow, and very soon was trundling my present, which I had resolved to say was Dan's, to the good old rector.

On the way he mentioned casu-

ally that a press-gang was in the neighbourhood. "They don't know it, the boys at Lyme, else they'd keep at home for a day or two. There'll be a good few sailors more aboard his majesty's ships when that gang has done its business."

I thought nothing at the time.

But later on I started, remembering that Joshua had promised to deliver twenty kegs that morning, and that at daybreak he would be at the hiding-place. Another thought struck me.

I had no doubt, knowing the nature of the business, and the haste made after a run to get the cargo safely stowed away and disposed of, that Joshua intended to take it all in two loads, probably one that morning and one the next. This knowledge put a fatal power into my hands. I turned the thought over in my mind till it became a resolution, clear and determined. Since Joshua had sent Dan and all of them away to sea, he should go too.

Of course, they could not take a miller from his mill—no. But suppose Joshua was caught, in boatman's rig; handling his kegs in Rousdon Bay!

When John Beer had taken the rector his brandy, and carried off his own to some secure place which he knew of, probably to a friend in the town, a burning desire came over me to see Joshua Meech face to face, and to triumph over his misfortunes. Tired as I was with

my long night's work, I hastened to put on my hat and set off once more for my three-mile walk across the fields.

I cannot pretend to anything but a feverish joy that so far my weary head suffered. I knew how mean and parsimonious he was, how he had pinched and saved, denying himself luxuries and living hardly, in order to feel richer every day. I was quite certain that his chief pleasure was to open his hiding-place secretly and count his treasures. I rejoiced to think how, in these moments, there was mixed up a feeling that he was saving up for me, and how that memory would be an additional stab for him. For me? Was it possible, even without his superhuman wickedness, for me to look upon another man after my glorious Will?

So he had already found out his loss. That was strange. Did he then look in the morning to see if it was safe? But perhaps the open window and the hanging shutter awakened his suspicions. I should soon know. As I drew near the mill, and looked down upon it from the top of the steep lane leading from the high road, I could not help feeling the contrast between the beauty of the place and the angry passions of its master and the girl who was going to visit him. But I had to hide my indignation. I composed my features as well as I could, and crossed his orchard.

Joshua was sitting on the bench outside the mill. The wheel was slowly going round and round, with its monotonous sound, and the mill was at work. But its master sat motionless, his head on his hands. He was trying to think who could have robbed him.

"Joshua!" I cried; "Joshua! What is the matter? Are you asleep?"

"I wish I was," he replied hoarsely. "I think I shall never be able to sleep again. What do you want, Pleasance?"

"I came to tell you, Joshua, that I saw the fleet pass along the horizon this morning. It must be Nelson's. Dan and the rest must be aboard one of the ships."

"Ay, ay; no doubt. Well, they—they—they will get through it, I daresay."

"Oh, Joshua, what a villain must he be who informed against them! What could we do to that villain to punish him properly? Tell me, Joshua."

"Do—do? What could we do? Put him in the duck-pond, I suppose," he replied wearily.

"That would not be half enough, Joshua. I should like to take away all his money"—he started—"and to tell all the world, and send him away forever with the curses of the people."

"Ay," he said, "never mind the informer, Pleasance; listen to me. I've been robbed."

"You, Joshua? You robbed?"

"I've been robbed of every farthing I had. All in gold—all tied up in bags—all the money I've been saving for years."

"All the money you saved to marry me with?"

"It is all gone."

"Then you can't marry me, which will be removing a temptation, Joshua. But who could have done it?"

"I don't know. I can't think. Go away, Pleasance, and let me think by myself."

"Is there anyone who is at enmity with you, Joshua?"

He shook his head.

"Anyone whom you have wronged, Joshua?"

A flush crossed his face. "Go, child. You can do nothing, leave me alone."

"Joshua," I said, retreating, "you are a Methody. Remember what you said to me: 'Patience, and kiss the rod.'"

I found next morning, on investigating the cache, that twenty kegs of the salt-water had been taken out, no doubt at daybreak. I rowed to Lyme, sought out John Beer, and revealed my new plot. He at once fell in with it. The press-gang was in hiding somewhere at Up Lyme. Four of them would be enough to effect the capture. He would tell them where to go, and what they were to expect—a determined man, who would fight for his liberty, but a good sailor.

They were to lie concealed among the rocks, just under the hiding-place of the cargo. They were to wait until they heard their victim climbing down the zig-zag road, and then they were to effect their seizure. Above all, they were to take care not to let him be seen in Lyme, Up Lyme, Bridport, or any of the places round, where he might be known.

Now this seemed to be a really splendid piece of revenge. The other things were very well in their way, but incomplete. Joshua was, no doubt, mad with rage at being robbed of his money, but he would recover in time. Also he would be enraged beyond expression at losing his brandy. Still he would recover from that blow. But how would he recover from the blow of being pressed and sent to sea?

All that night I did not sleep. I heard towards daybreak the footsteps of the press-gang as they crept down the road to the bay. And then I went out in the dark to see for myself what would happen.

About four o'clock I heard the noise of Joshua's waggon-wheels, and then I—I was sitting among the rocks, wondering when the last act of my revenge would be completed—I saw his figure in the moonlight, as he strode down the rough way, with the certain tread of one who knew the path, and had trodden it hundreds of times.

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His face was shaded by his hat and I could not see that.

He went straight to the place where his treasure lay, and roughly pulling away the brambles, he began to take out the kegs. Apparently, from his composure, he had not yet learned from the worthy justice the nature of the new misfortune.

As he began the work, I heard other footsteps. They were those of the four sailors. I saw them, but he did not—being intent upon the job—come cautiously out of the shade of the rock. There was not much to climb—about twenty feet—and they took it, having Joshua well in sight, with a rush and a shout.

Joshua sprang to his feet and turned upon his assailants. They carried cutlasses, but these were not drawn, and each had a stout short cudgel in his hand. Joshua fought like a madman. One after the other he hurled his assailants from him. He was a splendidly strong man. But the others came like bulldogs, they had now caught hold, and they would not let go. When it was all over, he stood with bleeding face and head, and arms pinioned close to his sides. He could make no more resistance.

"Now, mate," said one of the men, "you come quiet, or we'll make you that quiet as you'll never want to sing no more."

All the rest growled acquies-

cence. They had had enough of fighting for that bout.

"But what's all this?" The leader pointed to the kegs, three or four of which Joshua had already brought out and laid upon the grass.

"Brandy," said Joshua.

The men looked at one another.

"A gimlet," said the pinioned Joshua, "is in my pocket."

One of them drew out the gimlet, and bored a hole. Joshua shook his head cheerfully. No doubt they would all get drunk, and he would escape.

"Never a pannikin, be there, mate?" the man asked his prisoner.

Joshua shook his head.

Then I laughed to myself. For the man who bored the hole lifted the keg, and poured what he thought was brandy into his open mouth.

"Faugh—waugh—pr—rt!"

"What's the matter?"

"It isn't brandy at all. Faugh—waugh! It's sea water."

"It's brandy," said Joshua.

"Drink it yourself, then."

He lifted the keg. Joshua drank.

He too behaved in the same surprising manner.

"It was brandy three weeks ago," said Joshua, despairing.

Then he sat down, saying no more, while the men tried the other kegs with the same result. They all contained sea-water.



"Got any more, mate?" asked one of them, looking round.

"There's a dozen more, behind that blackberry bush," said Joshua, with the calmness of complete despair.

They searched; they lugged them all out; they bored the gimlet into every one. Not one single drop of brandy in any.

"This here," said one, "is a most amazing go. What was you agoing to do with they kegs, mate?"

"Sell them," said Joshua.

"Was you a-going to sell them for brandy, or was you a-going to sell them for bilge water?"

"They were full of brandy three weeks ago," repeated Joshua. "That is all I know."

They looked at each other in amazement. Then the leader gave the word, as if nothing unusual had happened:

"Fall in, men. March!"

Just then I stepped from my hiding-place—the daylight was pretty clear then—and ran up over the rocks so as to meet them higher up on the road. That looked as if I might have been awakened by the noise of the fight, and came out to see what it was.

"Pleasance!" cried Joshua, "This is lucky. Tell these men—it is a press-gang—they have pressed me—me—a simple miller, and not a sailor at all—tell them they have no right——"

"Oh Joshua—Joshua," I said, "this is very sad! Won't you let

him go, gentlemen? This is a dreadful misfortune. And all the brandy spilled? Dear me! Oh, do let him go! He is not a regular sailor, indeed, gentlemen, indeed he is not. Though he is so handy aboard that he would surprise you. Do let him go—do! He knows every inch of the French coast, but you must not press him. He is the best boatman from Lyme to Weymouth, though he is a miller. Oh, he is much too good a sailor to be pressed. Do let him go!"

"Let him go?" cried the boat-swain, with an oath. "If I let him go, I wish I may be smothered in a French prison."

"Oh, Joshua, Joshua!" I cried, as they dragged him away pinioned and powerless. "Dispensations! Grievous dispensations! Let us kiss the rod!"

## CHAPTER VI.

### LADY CAMPION.

**I** HAD ought to have been the happiest girl in the whole world, because I had craved for full revenge and obtained it. Nobody could have been punished more effectively than Joshua. I had deprived him of everything: of his money, which he loved; of his reputation, of which he was proud, because no one, most certainly, would ever trust him again in the

gentlemen? This is a dreadful matter of brandy which had not fortune. And all the brandy paid the duty; and of his personal Dear me! Oh, do let him liberty, because they were quite is not a regular sailor, in certain, once they had him on gentlemen, indeed he is not board, not to let so smart a sailor go. He is so handy aboard that he will surprise you. Do let him go.

He knows every inch of the coast, but you must not trust him. He is the best boatman I ever saw. He is the best boatman I ever saw to Weymouth, though I have never seen him there. Oh, he is much too good to be pressed. Do let him go?" cried the boatman.

"If I let him go," cried the boatman, "I may be smothered in my own blood."

"Joshua!" I cried, "and him away pinioned." "Dispensations! dispensations! Let us kiss and be friends."

## CHAPTER VI.

### LADY CAMPION.

IT had to have been the proudest girl in the world, because I had saved for full reward. Nobody had punished more than Joshua. I had done everything: of his reward; of his reward; he was proud, most certainly, and again in the

Yet revenge does not satisfy. And it cannot atone. No amount of suffering and sorrow restores the shattered past; you cannot bring a murdered happiness into life by hanging the murderer. All this I did not understand, and sat alone in my cottage, or wandered alone on the Undercliff, seeking satisfaction in the memory of my revenge, and finding none.

Three weeks or a month passed so. Had I lived much longer in this loneliness—for I spoke to no one, not even to the faithful old woman who took care I did not starve—I think I should have gone mad with much brooding. But there came an end.

It was on a sunny forenoon in November, I was thinking how it must be out at sea for Dan and the boys, and wondering whether William thought of me as much as I thought of him, and trying to bring back to my mind his handsome face and laughing eyes, when I saw a most unaccustomed sight. There came along the lane, riding slowly, because the road was rough, a gentleman dressed in an immense cloak with a fur collar, buckled at the neck. He was a middle-aged man, perhaps turned fifty, and of grave aspect. Behind him rode two ser-

vants, each of whom carried at the back of his saddle a small leather trunk.

The gentleman looked about him curiously. The place, left now to the charge of the two old people, was already beginning to show signs of neglect. I sat in the porch half hidden by the great fuchsia-tree. He seemed to be looking for some one to speak to. The servants rode up to him, and they all then consulted.

"There is no other house but this in the place. It must be Gulliver's Farm."

I emerged from the porch, and went to ask of whom the gentleman was in search. He took off his hat politely.

"You are Miss Pleasance Noel?" he asked.

"Yes sir, I am Pleasance."

It was so seldom that I heard my surname, that I had almost forgotten its existence.

"You are the young lady of whom I am in search. You are a friend, I believe, of Mr. William Campion, son of the late Sir Godfrey Campion."

"He is my sweetheart," I replied.

Then the gentleman smiled, dismounted, and gave the reins to one of the servants.

"I am John Huntspill," he said. "I have the honour to be a partner in that firm; I am travelling for the House in the southern counties. I am also, I may boast,

in the confidence of Mr. William. May I, therefore, beg the honour of a private interview with you?"

This was very imposing. I led the way into the house and begged him to be seated; at the same time I offered him a glass of brandy, assuring him, in the words of Dan Gulliver, that it was right good brandy which had never paid duty. In my girlish ignorance, I conceived that the payment of duty inflicted some grievous damage to the character of brandy; also I thought that everybody in polite society offered everybody else glasses of raw spirit.

"Thank you," Mr. Huntspill replied, with stately courtesy. "The partners in the house of Campion and Co. never drink any spirits, on principle, except their own rum, and that is duty paid."

He meant the last fact as an admonition—I took it as a confession that the rum was of inferior quality.

"I have received," he went on, "two letters, part of which I propose to communicate to you. In fact, young lady, they immediately concern you. The first is from Mr. William."

He opened a great leathern pocket book and produced two letters.

"I received this," he said, "ten days ago, being then in the village of Brighthelmstone, and immediately resolved upon travelling hither to acquaint you with the wishes of Mr. William.

"He informs me, first, of the lamentable chain of events which have led the young gentleman into this melancholy position. Had we known of it in time, such is the influence of the house, and so signal were the services of the late Sir Godfrey (of pious memory), that we might and certainly should have procured the immediate release of Mr. William, and probably the pardon of the others. But his pride would not allow him to communicate the news to us. The letter is written on the road to Portsmouth, whence he is to be drafted—great heavens! the son of Sir Godfrey a sailor before the mast!—on board one of the ships in His Majesty's fleet. He says then:

"Before this unlucky accident, it was my singular good fortune to engage the affections of a young person in whose soul, I believe, virtue and goodness alone reign." Mr. Huntspill read this passage very impressively, repeating the last words—"virtue and goodness alone reign." He bowed, and I blushed, not with satisfaction at hearing these gracious words, but in humiliation, thinking how little I deserved them, and how I had wreaked a revenge in which virtue played so poor a part.

Mr. Huntspill went on: "The worth of her heart is illustrated and made apparent to the world by the extraordinary beauty of her face and person"—Oh Will, Will!

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"She has promised to make me happy by becoming my wife. The promise remains to be fulfilled on my return, should a benignant Providence grant my return to my native shores. I have told you, my generous friend, the whole of my story. You will, I am sure, continue to behave to me with the same——' that is not part of the business," said Mr. Huntspill, interrupting at this point. "He goes on presently: 'I have written to my mother—who must on no account discover the degrading situation in which I have been placed—stating, which is perfectly true, that I am going to sea for a long voyage, in which I may visit many lands, and that I hope to pay my dutiful respects to her on my return. I have also informed her of my proposed marriage with Pleasance Noel, and begged her, as a mark of her forgiveness and continued love, to receive my betrothed in her own house, and, during my absence, to have her instructed in the practice of those external accomplishments which alone are wanting to make her an ornament to the polite world. Goodness, my dear friend, is at all times better than rank.'

"It is indeed," said John Huntspill, folding up the letter. "With this, which was forwarded to me from London, came a letter from Lady Campion herself, a portion of which I will also read to you."

"It has long been my resolu-

tion,' she says, 'to attempt no further interference with my son's plans of life. His devotion to a musical instrument, especially when that instrument is the common fiddle, seems to me inconsistent with the sobriety of a London merchant; his readiness at all times to forsake the counting-house for a concert or a play, seems to me unworthy of the seriousness which should characterize a churchman; while his roving habits hold out little hope of a steady future. I have now learned that he has gone to sea, after contracting an engagement of the most serious character with a young woman, apparently of humble origin.'

"My father was a ship's carpenter," half in pride and half in explanation. Before I knew Will I had always regarded that rank as exceptionally dignified. But I was quite aware that Lady Campion would hardly be likely to think so highly of the position.

"Quite so," said John Huntspill. "A most respectable and useful vocation. Let me continue: 'In justice to her and to myself, I should wish to make her acquaintance. Will you, therefore, make it your business to see her. Communicate with her friends, and tell them that I propose to receive her in my poor house. And should she wish to remain and I to keep her with me, I undertake to bestow upon her whatever lessons and education she may yet require to befit

her for the station to which heaven hath raised her. You may bring her back with you, under your own protection.'

"Such, Miss Pleasance," said John Huntspill, "is the proposal made to you by Lady Campion. It will be my first care to lay it before your friends."

"I have no friends," I replied. "Dan and Job and Jeptlah are all at sea."

"Do you mean that you are alone, absolutely alone in this house?"

"Quite alone," I said. "Only in the cottage there are Isaac Agus and his wife. I live alone and sleep alone here. I thought I should go on living alone for some years."

"But you will not refuse Lady Campion's invitation? Consider, it is made at Mr. William's own request. She will be your mother."

"No," I said, "I cannot refuse it. But I am afraid. Oh Mr. Huntspill! I am a very ignorant country girl. The goodness and virtue that my Will thinks are in my heart, exist only in his own mind. He is foolish about me. I am not fit for him—so handsome and so strong."

"Nay," said John Huntspill, gravely, "the chiefest profit of virtuous love, as I understand it, being myself but a bachelor, and unworthy of the married condition, is that it leads the heart imperceptibly upwards, inasmuch as we fain

would possess the qualities which he—or she—who loves us, doth in his fondness attribute to us. Therefore, be of good courage, and resolve that when Mr. William returns, he will find his dreams more than realised."

This wise speech, so far from encouraging me, rather daunted me for the moment. Afterwards, when I came to remember it and make it out what it meant, I think it did give me courage.

"When, then, can you be ready?"

I blushed. For in truth I had nothing to travel in. My whole wardrobe only consisted of half-a-dozen frocks, including one which Will had caused to be made for me.

Mr. Huntspill read my thoughts.

"There are shops in Lyme," he said. "I will at once ride into the town and purchase for you the simple necessities requisite for a young lady's journey to London. I leave behind, for your protection, one of my servants. For the present, Miss Pleasance, I wish you farewell."

He bowed, touched my finger with his own, and was gone. Presently I heard him riding slowly down the lane, and I sat down to wait, wondering what new life this would be which was opening before me.

Outside, the servant, whom he had left behind for my protection had dismounted, had tied up his horse, and was leaning on a gate.



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It seemed inhospitable not to ask him into the house, and I did so, inviting him to sit down, greatly to his surprise. He refused to sit in my presence, but was pleased to accept such a meal as I was able to offer him, with two or three glasses of the brandy which never paid duty. This part of the entertainment, indeed, afforded the honest fellow infinite gratification.

It was about two o'clock in the afternoon when Mr. Huntspill returned, his servant carrying a box before him, and leading a horse on which was a lady's saddle.

When in my own room I was dressed in the new clothes, I hardly knew myself. A long black habit for riding, gloves, a hat and veil, all sorts of little things of which I hardly knew the use, neatly packed in a leathern valise. I finished my preparations at length, and came downstairs—dressed like a young lady. But I could hardly have looked one, because I felt awkward and constrained in my new attire. Mr. Huntspill bowed politely.

"The most beautiful girl," he said, repeating Will's dear words, "on all the southern coast."

That was all very well. But how would beauty give me courage to face Lady Campion?

We were to start at once. But a sudden thought struck me. The hearthstone! Dan's last words were to remember the hearthstone. I had seen to what use Joshua put

his, and I had every reason to believe that Dan's was, in the same manner, his own bank, the place where he confided his single talent, so that it could by no means grow or produce interest, or become useful at all, except for spending.

I reflected for a moment.

"Now, my dear young lady," said Mr. Huntspill, his eyes had been upon me ever since I came down in my new dress, and I could see that he looked at me with admiration. That to my mind meant that Will would have been satisfied, and I was glad.

"It is the hearthstone," I said.

He stared for a moment. Then he remembered that the general use of the lower sort of people was to hide away their money, and that the hearthstone was the general hiding-place, so that if a cottage was robbed, the first thing the burglars did was to prise up the hearthstone.

We raised the stone, Mr. Huntspill and I, between us. Beneath was a perfect mine, an Eldorado of gold and precious things.

Remember that Dan Gulliver was turned sixty years of age, that he had been smuggling ever since he was ten, that he had never had an unsuccessful run, and that ever since his father's death, the farm had supplied most of our frugal wants, always excepting the brandy, which never, &c.

I am afraid to say how much there was under the hearthstone. It



was, I know, more than a thousand pounds, all in golden guineas, tied up in bags containing a hundred each.

Mr. Huntspill poured the contents of each bag upon the table and counted the coin carefully. For each he made a separate memorandum. Mr. Huntspill tied up the bags again, called one of his servants, and confided them to his care. Then we started on our journey.

I said farewell to the two old people who were to be left in sole charge of Rousdon Farm. Mr. Huntspill wrote his London address, in case anything should be wanted. And then he lifted me into the saddle, and we turned our horses' heads Londonwards.

We rode through Lyme, along the rough way over the cliffs to Charmouth, and then past the yellow peak of Golden Cap, over some hills to Bridport, where we spent the first night of the journey, and where Mr. Huntspill bought me some things useful and pretty, and had my hair dressed for me by a gossiping old barber, who told me it was the most beautiful hair he ever had the honour of dressing.

I do not know how long we took to finish our journey to London. We did not—to begin with—proceed by the most direct road, because Mr. Huntspill, who was travelling for the firm and never neglected business, stayed in one

place and went to another without considering short ways.

I should have been perfectly happy but for two things—the never-ceasing anxiety about Will, and an always-increasing fear of the terrible Lady Campion.

The road, as we drew near London—say from Salisbury to Reading, which was the way we took, and from Reading through Windsor and Hounslow—became more and more crowded with carts, stage-coaches, post-carriages, family-coaches, and foot-travellers. They all seemed bound to London. What was this mighty London, which swallowed everything? Cattle in immense numbers—for London; herds of oxen, flocks of sheep, droves of turkeys and geese, waggon-piles with every conceivable thing—all for London. At regular intervals were the great inns, outside of which there lounged an army of grooms, butlers, helps, and postboys; in the yard was stabling for countless horses; post-carriages, carts, and gigs stood about under the penthouses; within were rambling passages and long dark galleries; the bedrooms were hung with heavy curtains, gloomy and ghostly. Mr. Huntspill was well-known everywhere. I noticed that everybody asked with particular respect after the health of Lady Campion, but no one inquired for that of Will.

And then the motley crowd along the road. The slouching labourer

in his smockfrock, hedging and ditching, who never moved from his village, saw many a curious group which might tell him of the outer world. A recruiting-serjeant, with twenty or thirty lads full of beer and martial ardour, longing to fight the French; a wounded and maimed sailor or soldier, hobbling along, begging his way from village to village; a procession of gipsies setting up their arrow-marks along the cross-roads, to show their friends where to look for them, stealing, singing, drinking, laughing, and fortune-telling; men who led about a dancing-bear, with a pole and a violin; men who took from place to place the bull who spent most of his pugnacious life in being baited; men who carried with them cocks for fighting, badgers for baiting, ferrets for ratting; the cheap-jack in his cart, the travelling theatre, the travelling circus, the travelling showman, the open-air gymnast, the vendor of cheap books, the singer of ballads, and sometimes — galloping along the road, blowing a trumpet, shouting: "In the king's name—way!"—the bearer of State despatches, hastening to London. Now and then we would pass a suspicious pair of horsemen, at sight of whom Mr. Huntspill would look to the pistols in the saddle, and beckon his servants to close up.

I learned a good deal in those days of other things besides curious and interesting sights. Mr.

Huntspill, who was always talking to me, taught them. For instance, in the gentlest and kindest manner possible, he instructed me in sundry points of minor morals—I mean carriage and conduct of myself. This, I knew, was done in order that I might not prejudice Lady Campion against me at the outset by some act of awkwardness or bad breeding.

"A lady," said Mr. Huntspill, who always spoke with authority, "is known by her acts and words first; but there is a connection between nobility of thought and dignity of carriage."

He had learned by this time all my deficiencies, and I knew that he was going to report upon them to Lady Campion. I was not afraid of the report which he would make of me, but I was horribly afraid of Madam, as he called her.

The day before we rode into London he talked about her.

"Lady Campion," he said, "is blind, as you doubtless know. But in a short time you will forget her blindness. She writes her own letters, and her letters are read to her by means of a confidential clerk. She hears reports about the affairs of the house, and gives her counsels—which are, in reality, her instructions. And all as well as if she had the use of her eyes. Madam," Mr. Huntspill went on, "was left sole guardian to Mr. William at the death of Sir Godfrey, her son being then fourteen

years of age; with a clause appointing Mr. William as chief partner in the house at the age of five-and-twenty. He is now three-and-twenty. He demands liberty of action until the time comes for him to rule over us. Meantime, Madam holds the reins with firmness and prudence. What she will hope for in you is the power to direct her son to his domestic and civic duties, and make the rover a worthy successor to the great Sir Godfrey, Lord Mayor of London."

This was disquieting. How could I?

He answered my look, being at all times a sympathetic man.

"Madam, will tell you how. You will modify the strictness of her injunctions by the gentleness of your own heart. Your affection for Mr. William will supply the rest."

Next day we rode over Hounslow Heath—where so many misguided men had committed the acts which led to a violent death; through Uxbridge, past Shepherd's Bush—a coppice in whose recesses there lingered at evening many a cowardly footpad, on the watch for some defenceless old man or woman; by the stately Holland Park, standing amid a lovely country set with trees; along the gardens of Kensington, on the north of which extended mile after mile of nursery and vegetable gardens; past the dreadful tree of Tyburn, at the corner of Hyde Park; and

thence, by a network of streets and lanes, in which it seemed impossible to find our way into the City of London.

I was silent with amazement at so much noise, such crowds, and such splendid buildings. I forgot Lady Campion, everything, in wonder and delight. I rode beside Mr. Huntspill in a dream.

He watched me, riding close at my side and guiding my horse. Presently we turned into a long winding lane with no carts or gongs, but a continuous stream of people. Many of them knew Mr. Huntspill, and took off their hats to him. He gravely returned the salute. The lane led to a small quiet square, in which were only private houses. One of these, the largest, occupied the whole side of the square.

"This," said Mr. Huntspill, "is Great St. Simon Apostolic, and this is Lady Campion's town house."

I dismounted in considerable trepidation. Mr. Huntspill led me by the hand to the house and up the stairs. He stopped at a door on the first landing and knocked. Then he opened the door gently, and led me into the presence of Lady Campion.

"Those," said a firm clear voice, "are the footsteps of John Huntspill: I welcome you, my friend. Is all well?"

"All is well, madam," said John Huntspill. "The interests of the house are prospering. I present to

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you, madam, the young lady of  
whom you wrote to me, Pleasance  
Neel, and commend her to your  
ladyship's protection."

"Come here, my dear. Closer  
—closer yet."

I had not dared to raise my  
eyes. Now I did so. I saw a  
splendid lady, apparently about  
fifty years of age, magnificently  
dressed in black velvet. Round  
her neck was hung a heavy gold  
chain. Her collar and wristbands  
were of costly lace. She was sit-  
ting when we came in, and she  
turned her head in the slow cau-  
tious way peculiar to blind people.  
Yet there was little look of blind-  
ness in her eyes, and she seemed  
to see me as my eyes met those  
large proud orbs of hers. She rose,  
however, to give me greeting, and  
continued gazing at me, as it  
seemed, reading my features in  
imagination. Then she placed her  
hands on my shoulders and began,  
in a way which made me tremble,  
slowly to pass her fingers over my  
face and head.

"You are pretty, child, and you  
are tall. What is your age?"

"I am past sixteen."

"What colour is your hair?"

"It is light brown. My eyes  
are blue."

All this time her busy sensitive  
finger were passing lightly over  
my face.

"Your name is Pleasance. Your  
father, John Huntspill tells me,  
was a ship's carpenter. Your

guardian, one Daniel Gulliver, has  
gone to sea, and you were left  
alone. My son William has fallen  
in love with you. You are be-  
trothed to each other without the  
formality of asking my consent.  
It was wrong in my son. I trust,  
my dear, that what I see of you  
will induce me to grant that con-  
sent. We have time before us  
during which we may do the best  
to learn each other's ways and char-  
acter. Be sure that in all you do,  
I shall be always watching you,  
blind as I am. You may kiss me,  
Pleasance."

I kissed her fingers, but she  
drew me to herself and kissed my  
forehead. Presently, to my dis-  
tress, John Huntspill went away,  
and I was left alone with madam.  
She began by asking me how I used  
to spend my days, what I used to  
read, of what character were my  
religious opportunities, and other  
questions designed to bring out  
exactly what I knew and how I  
thought. Then she told me that  
John Huntspill had prepared a re-  
port of my general ignorance, for  
which care would be immediately  
taken. She informed me further,  
that a skilful governess, aided by  
all kinds of masters, would begin  
their labours with me the very  
next morning.

She ended in her stately way :

"William did not wait for my  
consent, nor did you know, per-  
haps, that it is unbecoming of a  
maiden to engage herself without

that consent. Nevertheless, should you be diligent and prove yourself possessed of the aptitude and the qualities which he believes to be in you, that consent will not be withheld. Understand me, Pleasance, William is of age, and in two years' time or so will be called upon to assume the chief command of this great firm. He can marry without my consent, if he wishes. For your own happiness, and in obedience to the Fifth Commandment, you will study to obtain my approval. I do not deny that I could have wished—yes, that I most strongly wished—my son to form an alliance with one of gentle birth. You must try to remove this disappointment.”

Then my new manner of life began. It was, indeed, different from the old.

For the free wild country—the confinement of a city mansion; for gardens, fields, and sea-beach—the flags of a city square; for fresh air—smoke; for entire idleness—hard and unremitting toil; for freedom—the strict and stately manners of the time; for running and climbing about the cliffs—a daily drive in a stately coach, with a fat coachman on the hammer-cloth and two tall footmen behind; for doing everything myself—having a lady's-maid of my own; for the companionship of Dan, with his pipe and glass of brandy-grog—stately dame who sat watching me with blind eyes, and the patient middle-

aged lady, my governess, who listened kindly to my troubles and smoothed the road to knowledge. What things I learned, of which before I had never even guessed! Every morning I practised for two hours on the pianoforte, or harpsichord, as madam called it. After breakfast came the masters. There was M. Elie Lemoine, master of dancing and deportment—he was my favourite, because I took to dancing with great readiness; a singing master; a refugee French lady, of courtly manners, to teach me French; one of the clerks, an elderly man with a wife and large family, permitted to increase his income by giving me lessons in writing; and a professor of elocution, who taught me to read with propriety.

With all this work before me, I had little time to think about poor Will. One day, however, John Huntspill came to see me, and requested that I would favour him by walking in the square with him for a few minutes.

He told me that Madam was growing anxious about her son. His story, to put her off the scent, was that he was going to the West Indies. And the West Indian mails had come in, but no letter, naturally enough, had arrived from Will Campion.

“Everything depends,” he said, “on there being no inquiry. I have, for my own part, ascertained by a Portsmouth correspondent in



whom I can trust, that Mr. William is now at sea. Madam would die of shame were she to learn the truth. I see nothing for it but to feign a letter from him. I have written it, and propose to bring it to-morrow as coming from the office. It will doubtless be for you to read it aloud. We are embarked in a course of falsehoods. From one deceit springs many. Far, far better had Mr. William at once confessed his name and position, and obtained, as he certainly would have done, His Majesty's pardon for a boyish escapade."

Yes, we were indeed embarked in a course of falsehood. Not one letter did we write, but many—four every year. John Huntspill wrote them, getting his descriptions of West India scenery from all sorts of sources, avoiding the islands of Jamaica, Barbadoes, and St. Kitt's, in which the house had correspondents. Then he would bring in his precious missive, announcing calmly that a mail was in from the West Indies bringing a letter for Madam. Lady Campion always took it, felt it, remarked how the smell of the vessel clung to the paper, and then putting it into my hands, commanded me to read it. In this way we carried on a regular correspondence, and though from time to time Madam complained that her son did not send direct answers to her questions (which we could not be expected to know), we managed to

make things hang together, and the poor lady never suspected. Nevertheless it went to my heart, and John Huntspill used to throw a guilty glance at me when she folded up the letter carefully, and placed it in her bosom, as if she was pressing her son to her heart. Also, on the days when a letter arrived she was silent, and would request to be left alone in her room.

No letter really came from Will at all. He was fighting the French somewhere. That made me tremble at night, thinking of the almost daily news, shouted about the streets, of another engagement and another victory, with the dreadful list of killed which followed after. Yet John Huntspill bade me hope. Among the lists, so far, he had not seen the name of William Campion, or those of Dan and his boys.

So the days passed on. Lady Campion did not mix in general society, but she received at dinner, on certain days, a few old friends of her husband. These dinners, indeed, were magnificent, but one always wished to be a spectator instead of an actor in an entertainment which began at six, and from which even the ladies could not escape before nine. As for the gentlemen, they remained over their port, and I think many of them remained too long.

On Sunday we went to a city church where the clergyman wore an immense wig, and used to have



a trick of smacking his lips between his words, which always amused me. Thus he would say: "Now the sons of Eli"—smack—"were sons of Belial"—smack, smack—"they knew not the Lord"—smack. He always preached a sermon of the same length, exactly measured—counting the introductory prayer and the concluding benediction—to the space of half an hour. He was a good old man, sometimes like my poor old friend the Rev. Benjamin Burden, fond of port and good living, benevolent, learned, and holding strong opinions on the authority of the clergy.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE VICTORY OF TRAFALGAR.

**D**AY followed day, and season followed season. I had been with Lady Campion nearly two years. I had been so long in the great quiet house, where no footfall was ever heard on the thick carpets, so long with the stately lady who saw everything with blind eyes, that the old life seemed quite gone and lost. No more running and singing; and if, as happened sometimes at first, a sense of weariness would fall upon me, Madam, who divined everything, would admonish me:

"It is for Will's sake, Pleasance."

And for his dear sake, what la-

bour, what weariness, could not be borne?

We did not stay all the time in the city. Lady Campion had a house at Chertsey, whither for three months in the year we repaired, governess, lessons, and all. There a horse was kept for my own riding, and a groom to protect me. There I could ramble about a park where there were deer, whom I taught to come at my call, and eat out of my hand. And there was the river. I do not know whether it was more delightful for me to watch the current of the Thames, slipping silently away, or the waves of Rousdon come tumbling along the shore, rolling over each other in ceaseless sport. When September vanished, and the leaves were yellow, we left Chertsey and drove back to our city house, in a carriage almost as grand as that of the lord mayor.

No letter from Will all this time; not one line.

We kept up the deceitful correspondence between Will and his mother. What travels we contrived for him! What adventures John Huntspill and I imitated from books, or invented out of our own head! What hairbreadth escapes! What romantic incidents! Madam had no suspicion. She watched for the arrival of the letters; she had them read and re-read to her; she learned them all by heart; she quoted them as admirable specimens of the best modern style; she

dated events from incidents in the letters. Such a thing happened when she heard how her son had captured an alligator—been wrecked on the coast of Cuba—marched inland with the Honduras Indians—or rescued the starving slaves abandoned on a West Indian key. We might have laughed but for the dreadful fear that possessed our souls, of which we never dared to speak, that fear which made John Huntspill look through every list of killed and wounded, which blanched my cheek at every announcement of another naval action. For Will, we knew, was before the mast, and gone afloat to fight the French.

They were all victories in those days. Surely there was never a time when a nation was so brave as in the time of that long war. There was no note of hesitation then—no timid counsels. Girl as I was, I gloried in the spirit of the country when, with one consent, the nation flew to arms to resist the threatened invasion. And one could not choose but exult when the brave sailors went out to fight and conquer, with never a thought of striking the good old flag. I seem to see again the newsboys flying through the streets shouting the news of another glorious victory—the people in the streets buy the handbills and shake hands with each other, strangers though they may be. I forget the other side of the picture—the trembling

women, the orphaned children, myself beating down the terror of my heart. I remember only the glory of it. Poor Madam, who knew nothing of this fear, took, of course, the greatest interest in the doings of the English fleets. There could not be too many actions to please her; every action was a victory; every victory reduced the enemy's resources, and enabled her own great ships to perform their voyages in greater safety. Every day after breakfast, I read aloud the *Morning Post*, especially that portion of the paper which gave the naval intelligence.

One morning I read the news of the Battle of Trafalgar.

The list of casualties would be published in a few days. John Huntspill and I went about with heavy hearts. He did not dare to meet my eyes. For his Portsmouth correspondent had found out that all four were on board the Victory.

We had illuminations in the city to celebrate the event on the Day of Rejoicing. We drove in state to church to offer up our far from humble offering; we invited guests for a feast of thanksgiving; we sent money for the poor in token of gratitude; and we gave orders that the rejoicings of the house of Campion and Co., should excel in splendour those of every other private house. The front of the house was covered over with a trellis-work, on which were fixed thousands of oil-lamps of different

colours, arranged in patriotic designs. In the centre was the lion and unicorn, with the words "God save King George!" Above was the union-jack with the legend, "Honour to the glorious dead!" I drew out the plan by Madam's instructions. She thought me wanting in enthusiasm, and delivered a little speech on the part which should be borne by women in the glory of their country. Above all, she said—her words fell upon me as a bad omen—above all, women must be ready for the sake of their country to imperil, without a murmur, the lives of husbands, lovers, or sons.

Besides the oil-lamps for the house illumination, Lady Campion devised another and a more original manifestation of joy. She procured a ship's boat, which she caused to be mounted upon wheels, decorated with masts and flags, and manned by a dozen jolly tars, and a band of music. The band was to play patriotic airs, the boat was to be dragged through the streets, the sailors were to sing; the masts being adorned with festoons of oil-lamps. The chief duty impressed upon the men was that they were to keep sober, if they could, until midnight, when a puncheon of rum would be broached for them in the square of Great St. Simon Apostle. In the morning of this joyful day, John Huntspill, in paying his daily visit to Madam, handed me quietly a letter. It was addressed to me—I had seen the

writing once before, in the parish register—by the rector of Rousdon. Could it be from Will? I hastened away, and tore it open with trembling fingers. It was not from Will. It was from Dan Gulliver, and it was the saddest letter that ever a girl received:

"My dear Pretty," said poor old Dan,—“We have made the port of Portsmouth, with the admiral aboard in his coffin. Jephthah was killed in the action with a round shot, which cut him in two pieces. My poor, pretty Pleasance! don't cry too much, but Mr. Campion fell overboard on the way home, and is consequently drowned. This is bad news for you, I am afraid; and for me too. Job sends his love, and he says he is alive, and he wishes it had been him.—Your affectionate,  
“DAN GULLIVER.”

That is the news which greeted me on the day of illumination for the victory of Trafalgar.

My governess came to me. I sent her away with some excuse, and sat down by myself, saying over and over again, so that I should be able to feel the whole bitterness of despair: “Will is drowned! Will is drowned! We shall never see him again!”

John Huntspill came in search of me. He saw by my face what had happened. He took the letter from my fingers, and read it.—“Poor Pleasance!” he said, “Poor, poor child!”

I think he must have sat with

me all that morning. I know he talked from time to time, but I forget what he said. Presently I began to understand something. "We must not let Madam know," he repeated. "She must never know. We will prepare a letter from— from her son"—he paused, and for a moment his voice broke—"stating that he is going on some expedition up the country; and then no more letters at all will come afterwards, and you will mourn together—you and his mother. But she must never know her son's real end."

Had I had my will I would have gone straight to Madam, and told her all. But it seemed more merciful that she should be spared the details which he wished his mother never to know.

"For his sake, Pleasance," urged John Huntspill, "for his sake be brave, keep up your heart before her. Let not my lady's pride, as well as her heart, be broken. She must never know. For his sake she must never know."

He would not leave me till I promised that I would do my best. During the rejoicings I too would seem to rejoice.

Oh heavy day! Oh day which seemed as if it would never pass! At one I was called to luncheon with Madam. She was in excellent spirits—happier than I had ever known her.

Presently she asked sharply:

"What is the matter, Pleasance? You are crying."

"I was thinking, Madam," I sobbed, "of the brave fellows who are killed."

"Yes, but there is a time to mourn and a time to rejoice. You were thinking, my child, of my son?" I did not answer. "Come to me, Pleasance." She was sitting after luncheon in her armchair beside the window. "Come to me."

I knelt at her feet, and buried my head in her lap.

"He is a long time away, is he not? But I write to my son, and tell him about you, child. When I wrote last I sent him word that I would not oppose his desire. Yes, Pleasance, I have watched you more narrowly than you know. You will make my son happy. Take my blessing, my dear."

She laid her hand upon my head solemnly. Ah! if she knew—if she only knew!

In the evening, at half-past five, we had a great dinner, which lasted until half-past nine, and then we all sallied forth, including Madam, into the street, protected by a bodyguard of the House's porters armed with stout cudgels. The streets were full of people, shouting, fighting, and drinking. If they passed a house without illumination, they broke the windows. Should we never finish? I thought.

Midnight came at length, and the boat with the sailors came back to the square. The puncheon

of rum was rolled into the square; there was more shouting, more fighting, until the contents were all gone. We were at the open window, looking on. At last the rum was all drunk up, the mob dispersed, the oil-lamps went out one by one, and we were able to go to bed.

"Good-night, my daughter," said Madam, as she retired, exulting and happy, to her room. It was the first time she had called me her daughter. Oh, the bitterness! that such a day of death and bereavement should be chosen for this act of grace and kindness.

Let me not speak more than I can help—the pain, even now, is too great—of my own sufferings at this time. Remember that I had to wear all day long a mask of cheerfulness. If I failed for a moment, there was something in the quick sympathies of the blind lady which enabled her to perceive it at once.

This torture endured for a fortnight. Then the end came, in a way which we little expected and had not guarded against.

It was in the forenoon, about half-past eleven, before John Huntspill had left Madam, and before the arrival of my singing-master, who was due at twelve. I was alone in my own room, free for a moment from tutors, governesses, and my lady—free to think of the past, my only solace. My own maid—she was the only one

in the house who knew that I had some secret sorrow—came to tell me that there was a sailor, an old sailor, in the hall, who wished to see me. Who could it be but Dan Gulliver?

It was indeed old Dan himself. He came upstairs in his slow and quiet way. I saw him before he saw me. He was dressed like a common sailor; his hair was greyer and his dear old face graver; there was no other change.

He stood in the doorway. He actually did not recognise me.

"Dan!" I cried, springing into his arms. "Dan! Don't you know me?"

Then he did, and laid his hands upon my shoulders, holding me back and looking at me, before he kissed my cheek.

"My pretty!" he said, "and growed so tall. And such a lady. To be sure she always was as sweet-mannered as any lady in the land. And oh, my pretty! he's gone! he's gone! Don't take on; don't take on."

"Tell me all about it, Dan. Tell me. And poor Jephthah gone too."

"Cut in two halves, he was, with a chain-shot. Died in action, my boy Jephthah. But Mr. Campion, poor young gentleman, he died by drowning. Fell off the yard in the night, and never was seen—how could he be seen?—afterwards. Poor young gentleman!"



"Oh, Dan!—Dan—my heart will break!"

"Cry, pretty, cry as much as ever you can. But cryin' won't bring him back. Cry now, while I tell you all about him.

"They knowed our story aboard the 'Victory.' I was smuggler Dan. The boys were smuggler Job and T'other Job—because, I'm sorry to say, they mariners aboard his majesty's ships never knew which was which. And so Jephthah, who is now cut in two pieces was never knowed as such. And Mr. Campion they called Gentleman Jack. Now remember—some young gentlemen, after getting a three years' billet in the fo'ksle for smuggling, would ha' sat down and grizzled. Mr. Campion wasn't one o' that sort. 'Providin' always,' he says to me—'providin' always, Dan, as my mother never finds out, why, what odds is a three years' cruise?' And merry with it. Once he ketches hold of a fiddle, the fo'ksle's alive; when he began to play you'd ha' thought the fiddle was talkin', not him a playing. All round him the men would be sittin' an' singin', till the whole ship was as good-tempered as if there wasn't nary a bos'n nor petty officer aboard.

"Well, you may depend on it, pretty, that it wasn't long before the officers got to know what an uncommon sailor they'd got shipped aboard the Victory, for a little run as he had made across the Chan-

nel one fine night, and it wasn't long before Captain Hardy hisself, finding Mr. Campion on the quarterdeck, axed him—ay! before the admiral—who he was and how he came aboard. Mr. Campion, no more afraid of speaking to the captain than o the carpenter, he told him, touching his hat, that he had been caught smuggling, that they'd all got off with three years, for the information they gave to the Admiralty, and that he hoped to give satisfaction to his honour so long as he was aboard, after which time, he said, he should give up sailing before the mast. Captain Hardy he laughed, and the Admiral laughed; and then his lordship, who ought to know, said, in his quiet, easy way, that a man was no worse a sailor for being a gentleman born, but that gentlemen ought not to run cargoes across the Channel. After that I think the word was passed down to make some sort of difference with us. Anyway, the worst of the bos'ns never laid rope's end on none of us four.

"Come the action off Trafalgar. My pretty, we done our duty—Job and Jephthah and Mr. Campion and me—till that chain-shot came, and all I saw o' my boy Jephthah was two halves and a pool of blood.

"When the Admiral fell they told me off to help carry him down. That took best part of a quarter of an hour. The action lasted half



an hour longer. When the firing ceased and one could look around, I saw Mr. Campion along side of Job, alive and hearty. As for Jephthah, that poor boy was thrown overboard in two halves.

"We had nasty weather on the way home. One of the prizes foundered. And one dark night, in that nasty weather, all in the dark, poor Mr. Campion fell overboard and was drowned."

I listened to the story, my head in my hands. When Dan finished, I burst out into fresh sobbing and crying. I forgot about Lady Campion and everything. I never looked up. While Dan told his story I lay hiding my face in the sofa and crying, while the door stood wide open, and Madam herself stood there listening to every word, and with her John Huntspill, with white cheeks and troubled brow. I looked up in my grief, but sprang to my feet, terrified by the look of Madam. She was drawn to her full height, leaning on her stick; her face was perfectly white; her lips trembled; her sightless eyes seemed to pour lightning on poor Dan; she was terrible in her despair and wrath.

"Tell me," she said—"not you, girl; not you—tell me, man, smuggler, sailor, whatever you are, who was this Mr. Campion who fell overboard and was drowned?"

"He was your ladyship's son, and my Pleasance's sweetheart," said Dan simply.

"And he was a smuggler too, was he?"

"No, Madam, not a smuggler; only once, for a boyish freak, he must needs run across with me for a single venture. And when we were all tried, my lady, at Dorchester 'Sizes, we got off for three years aboard, 'acause of the news we picked up on our way back."

"Tried!—my son was tried!—with common sailors! He was tried and 'got off!'—he was sent to sea!"

"And he is dead," said John Huntspill, in solemn sadness.

"He is dead!" echoed his mother. "And you knew, girl, you knew that he was at sea, a common sailor?"

"Alas!" I moaned, "I knew only too well."

"That you concealed from me. Did you know on Illumination Day that my son was dead?"

"I knew that then," I replied.

She was silent for a space. Her eyes were dry and her lips parched. Had she wept, one might have had hope.

"All that day," she said, "you gazed upon a rejoicing mother who had lost her son; you, who had lost your lover, rejoiced with the rest."

"Nay, nay!" interposed John Huntspill. "She pretended, to save you. Listen, Madam. It was by Mr. William's own wish—nay, command—that you were kept in ignorance of what happened. I knew; I agreed that it would be

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better. As no letters came from Mr. William we wrote letters, and pretended that they were from him—for his sake; we read them to you—for his sake. When the dreadful news came, I resolved that we would keep up the deception—for his sake; so that you should never know when and how your son had died."

"Get me my desk, John Huntspill."

He went obediently, and brought back her great mahogany desk, in which were Will's pretended letters, all neatly tied up. She opened the desk and found the parcel.

"Take them! Henceforth, John Huntspill, you are no longer my confidential friend. I cannot trust you! Trust you? Oh Heaven! can I trust anyone? Is there man, woman, or child in this great world that will not lie?"

Poor woman! poor mother! She stood where she had heard the whole, just within the doorway, John Huntspill beside her; before her, Dan Gulliver, amazed, and not knowing what to say or do; and myself, overwhelmed with misery.

"We must put some kind of order into our affairs," said Madam. "You will send my lawyer to me at once, John Huntspill. Life is precarious, even with the old as well as with the young. I must make new dispositions. And I would be alone—altogether alone—in this house. You will take away the girl. If she wants money,

let me know. My son's betrothed must not starve because my son is dead—is dead!" she repeated, with a sad dropping of her voice.

I threw myself at her knees and caught her by the hand.

"Oh Madam! dear Madam, forgive me! Say that you forgive me, for Will's sweet sake!"

"Forgive!" she echoed in a hard voice. "Forgive! what does it mean? I shall not seek to do you harm. You shall have money. What more do you want? You have fooled me and played with me. You have tempted my son to destruction, you and your smuggler friends. My son, who should have been an honour to me and to this city, like his father before him, has died in disgrace. Forgive you? Yes, I will forgive you—when the sea gives up its dead."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### OUT OF THE GOLDEN MIST.

WE were back again at Rousdon—Dan Gulliver and Job and I—to begin again such portion of the old life as was possible. "We will go on," said Dan sadly, "just as we used to go on before ever he came. We will forget that he ever came. You will forget that you are a young lady."

Alas! not only was the old time gone, but nothing like it could

ever come again. Will had torn up the old time and thrown it away. It was dead. But the memory was left. One could sit and think till day after day that summer of 1803 unrolled itself again, and I could remember every word he said, even the lightest, with every gesture and every look.

The people at Lyme welcomed us all with a cordiality which meant not only gratitude for the past but hope for the future. Since that dreadful day of rebuke when Joshua's delivery of goods was discovered to be so much sea-water and nothing else, the town had been without brandy. Campion's fine old Jamaica rum, well enough in its way, was a poor substitute for the right good Nantes which Dan had provided. A taste had been developed which was doomed to disappointment, for no one succeeded Dan. A man cannot suddenly become a smuggler. Relations have to be established on the opposite shore, a connection to be formed at home; it is a business which is the growth of years. Now Dan represented the third, and his sons the fourth generation, of a long career in the trade, during which the whole business for this part of the coast had dropped into the hands of Gulliver and Company, smugglers to the nobility, gentry, and clergy of Lyme Regis and the surrounding country. Imagine, therefore, what a blow it was to the district when the fatal arrest hap-

pened, followed by the dreadful discovery of the sea-water! So that, when we came home again, there were visits paid to us not only of congratulation on our return, and condolence for poor Jephthah, but also of hope and temptation. Mr. Mallock, J.P., walked all the way from Lyme on purpose to see his old friend again, and to hint that the naked condition of his cellar, as regarded French brandy, was deplorable. The Rev. Benjamin Burden, who, long before the end of Dan's two years' captivity, had got through his four kegs, came to say that he was reduced to cider, and that of the thinnest. Dan received these visitors with great politeness, but held out no hopes that the old trade would be revived. First, he said, the Dancing Polly was gone; he should never again find a boat he could trust so well; then his nephew, Joshua Meech, was gone, pressed while busy with the kegs; though how them kegs turned out to be sea-water, he couldn't say; and Jephthah was gone; and he was getting old, and a second conviction meant a capital sentence. Then his money in John Huntspill's hands was bringing him a little income by itself, and he had given his promise not to smuggle any more. I think the old man had learned to look on smuggling, compared with the great game of war, as a small thing.

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this queer atmosphere, in which crime appeared no sin, and law-breaking was encouraged by the administrators of the law. The strangeness passed off after a while, and then the two years of life in the stately house of the old city-square appeared, in its turn, dreamy and unreal.

We came back to the old place, and began, in a broken-winged way, to resume the old ways. Then, naturally, I began to make the house and the house-keeping more in accordance with my recently acquired ideas. Dan acquiesced, wondering; Job tried to adapt himself to my ways with the goodwill which always distinguished him, but with less success. He betook himself to work on the farm; and, in assuming the smock-frock, immediately changed, just as he used to do, the roll of the sailor for the slouch of the labourer.

John Huntspill wrote to me from time to time. Madam made no sign of relenting. She never asked for news of me; she had withdrawn her confidence from him; she never spoke to anyone about her son; she sat silent all the day long, pale and stern. Her heart was full of bitterness.

When Dan began to talk about Joshua, and to regret the misfortunes which befell him, I considered that it would be well to conceal my share in them, and the fact of his treachery. When he came home again—should he ever

come home—it would be time to consider what steps should be taken. For the present it seemed better to leave the old man in the belief that Joshua's troubles were undeserved. Indeed, it would have been difficult to persuade him that his own nephew could be guilty of so foul and dastardly a crime. For my own part, I hoped that he would never come home again. "A life for a life," I said, bitterly. "As he destroyed my Will's life, so let his be taken away."

It was in the dark days of December that we came back to Rousdon. The winter weather suited the misery of my mind. Yet, after a time, the old charm of the sea fell upon me and soothed me. Dan painted and caulked the little boat. I put out to sea in her again during the soft, smooth mornings, common in winter on the south coast, when the sun floats, bathed in a soft yellow mist, itself a disk of molten gold; when, if you see a boat, her masts and hull are wrapped round with a yellow haze, like those of a boat in a dream. Sometimes Dan came with me, and we sailed or rowed, silent, thinking of the days that could come no more.

"There was no one like him," said Dan, one day, when we had been sitting quiet in the boat for an hour and more. "There never was no one like him, and never will be. Joshua had his good points. For a rough night at sea, and a ready hand, Joshua never

had his equal. But Joshua was grumpy. He took after his father in such respects. Now, Mr. Campion, he was always laughing, always talking, always ready to do a hand's-turn for everybody. Nobody like him. And to think of —."

"Don't, Dan, don't," I murmured, with the tears coming into my eyes.

We had a dreary Christmas that winter, though after service in the poor old barn, which had gone nearly roofless since Dan went away, the Rev. Mr. Burden came to take his dinner with us. A turkey from the farmyard furnished the meal, and afterwards Dan, with a guilty look, produced a bottle of rum. Mr. Burden shook his head sadly, but spent the rest of the day over the drink in company with Dan, and departed in the evening with legs which showed a tendency to tie themselves into knots.

Then the days began to grow longer, and the spring flowers appeared on the Undercliff, till all the ground was covered with the pale primrose. It must have been about this time that everything began to look as if it belonged to a dream. I am not sure when that strange feeling began; I knew, however, that Dan used to follow me about, and was loth to let me go out of his sight, for fear, I suppose, that, being in this dreamy way, I might fall into mischief and

do myself some injury. Also, he began to talk of doctors and going to Lyme for a change. Poor old Dan!

The place was so quiet, so remote from all external influences, that one fell back easily upon one's own brooding thoughts, I had no duties and no distractions. Dan was not a great talker, and Job was actually dumb, so that I lived in a dream, and it was a dream of the past.

The spring in its turn passed away, and was followed by the soft, warm summer, with days when I would sit a whole day through beneath the shade of the rocks watching the waves. Here Dan used to come after me, tempting me to go out in the boat with him, to fish with him, to walk with him, anything to rouse me from that state of dreamy despair. I used to sit and listen unmoved—unmoved I saw the tears roll down his cheeks—they only irritated me. Sometimes I think that in those days I must have been mad.

One night I could not sleep. It was in the middle of August, when there is little darkness on the sea, but only a luminous twilight. I rose about midnight, and dressed myself quickly, thinking I should escape Dan's attentions, and stole downstairs into the open air, just as I had done two years and a half before, to watch for the return of the Dancing Polly. It was not, as then, a rough and boisterous night.

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there had been all day a fresh breeze blowing from the south-east. This had died away, and there was little air left. I slowly passed down the well-known path, to sit by the shore and think of my poor dead Will. I sat there while the night slipped away. I was facing the mouth of the little creek, looking straight out to sea.

When the morning broke there was a light fog upon the water, which the sun, when it rose, coloured with a beautiful hue, changing every minute. I remembered then—Heaven knows how!—that it was the 14th of August, and three years since I first saw my Will. As I gazed seawards, looking through the fog, I became aware of a ghost.

It was the ghost of a boat shining in the golden mist, all gorgeous with colours. The hull was yellow and blue and crimson, the colours changing every moment; the sail looked like a sheet of azure silk, and the spirit who stood behind the mast—it was the spirit of my Will—was all glorified. I stood quite still, fearing that the vision would fade. I had often, before this, seen him in dreams of the night, but never in the broad day, and in dreams he vanished so swiftly that I could never find time to speak to him. The boat seemed at first to be floating on the water—but she was not. In the light air of the morning she was slowly making for the land; and presently

she passed through the mist, and lost all the gorgeous colours which the fog had lent her. But the ghost of my Will remained, pale, as all ghosts of drowned men should be. He saw me, as the bow of the boat grated on the stones—he cried my name—he threw up his arms—he leaped ashore.

"Oh, Will, Will!" I cried, falling upon my knees before him, "let me speak to you. Do not go away as you do in the dreams. Let me speak to you. I knew you would some day think of me, and come up from the grave. Oh, what am I to say, now you are here? What can I say, dear Will, poor Will, my dead love, my lost darling, come from Heaven to comfort my poor heart! Oh, it is breaking! Will, it is breaking with grief and pain!"

"Pleasance," he cried, lifting me in his strong arms, and folding me to his heart, "Pleasance, I am not dead—I am no ghost, my darling. I am come back to you again, alive—alive. Can you not understand? Oh, my love, my darling!"

I could not understand at first, nor for many days afterwards. But joy does not kill.

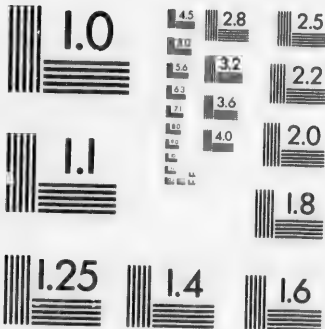
Will had, it was quite true, fallen overboard. But he was picked up by a French chasse-marée, and taken to France, where he lived among the fishermen, no one betraying him, till he could persuade one of them to trust him with a boat. He promised a large price





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should he reach England in safety. It is needless to say that he kept his promise.

When I was able to listen to it all, when I could sit with my hand in his, in such happiness as never any other girl, I believe, experienced, he began to talk about our marriage. He wanted to see his mother, but he would tell her himself, not write to her. And he could not go, he said, unless I would go with him. What could I say? Of course we were married, just as he wished, he and I, in Rousdon church, by the Reverend Benjamin Burden. Will doffed his sailor's clothes for the first time, and appeared dressed as a gentleman. Dan gave me away. It was agreed that we should ride straight from the church into Lyme, and thence post direct without stopping to London.

We left Dan and Job and the poor old rector at the door of the ecclesiastical barn. Will lifted me into the saddle, and we rode slowly away, poor old Dan crying, and Will promising soon to bring me back. We had ridden half a mile or so on our way along the Seaton road, when I saw before me, just before you come to Colway Lane, a figure which seemed familiar to me. It was indeed, only part of a figure, consisting of a man's trunk and a couple of very short wooden stumps, on which the owner was pegging his way, literally, with uncommon vigour. I was right:

the back of the man was familiar to me, for the face, when we came up with its owner, was the face of Joshua Meech.

He looked round at the sound of the horses' feet. At first he did not recognize us. I was dressed in a dark-green riding-habit, and wore a veil.

"Joshua," I said softly; do you not remember us?"

"Joshua Meech, my boy," cried Will, who knew nothing of what had happened, "How goes it, mate? Where did you lose your legs, man?"

"Where a good many lost their heads, Mr. Campion"—he spoke quite cheerfully, while a horribly guilty feeling seized me—"at Trafalgar. Glad to see you safe home again, sir. The villain who did the mischief, he's well punished, he is; and serve him right."

Now no one, except myself, ever knew who the villain was.

Later on, when Dan came to see us in London, he had a good deal to tell of Joshua.

The mill was set going again, after he found his money, by means of a mysterious letter with a London postmark. It had become ruinous, but the wheels were there, and Joshua began again to practise his ancient craft. He went no longer to chapel, but became a firm pillar of the established church, having been converted on board ship.

The way of his conversion was

simple. He once, in his early days aboard, began to argue a point with the chaplain, who was so amazed at the audacity of a common sailor pretending to be skilled in theological subtleties, that he complained to the captain. The captain, a choleric man, ordered an application of the only remedy then employed for offences and disorders at sea—three dozen.

Before the first dozen had been received, Joshua felt conviction pouring in. About midway through the second, the force of the conviction was irresistible. By the end of the third he had steadfastly resolved on adhering, while on board, to the Church of England and Ireland, as by law established. And after coming ashore he continued this godly habit.

It is the last scene of my story.

A bright morning in autumn, when even the City houses look pleasant, and the trees in the City churchyards have not lost their leaves, and are pleasant to the eye. We go to the house in the Square, Will and I, followed by John Huntspill. Madam has not gone to Chertsey this year.

There are no servants to meet us. John has taken care of that. We cross the hall and mount the stairs, covered with their thick Turkey carpets, which deaden every footfall. On the landing we can look into the great room which Madam always uses as her own. We can see Madam herself sitting

by the window, pale, rigid, and stern.

No one moves, no one whispers. The tears come into Will's eyes as he looks upon his mother. Presently John Huntspill takes my hand and leads me quietly into the room.

Madam looked up in her quick interrogative fashion.

"It is I, Madam," said John.

"Is there anything of importance, John Huntspill? Unless you have news to tell me, why do you come? And who is with you?"

"I have to say a thing of great importance, Madam. I bring with me a girl who has suffered much. I ask for your forgiveness for her, and for myself, for the deceit we practised upon you."

"Oh Madam!"—I knelt at her feet—"we have been very unhappy. Forgive me, and let us be as happy together—as we can."

"I said, Pleasance," she replied, "that I would forgive you when the sea gave up its dead. But that will be long, perhaps. We should wait—till the Judgment Day. My dear, I forgive you, for the sake of him whom we both loved. Pleasance, child"—she held out both her arms—"come and let us weep together, and go in mourning and sorrow all our days."

"Not in sorrow, Madam. Oh! not in sorrow, but in gladness. For look, the Lord is very merciful. The sea has given up its dead, and here is your son, home again, and in your arms."

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"This Able Volume." *Harper's Magazine*, Jan., 1879.

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